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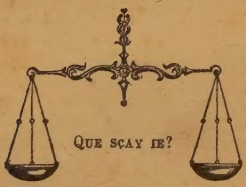
WORKS OF MONTAIGNE.



WORKS

OF

MICHAEL DE MONTAIGNE.

Montaigne Michel Eyquem de

COMPRISING

HIS ESSAYS, JOURNEY INTO ITALY, AND LETTERS, WITH NOTES FROM ALL THE COMMENTATORS, BIOGRAPHICAL AND BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES, ETC.

BY W. HAZLITT.

A NEW AND CAREFULLY REVISED EDITION,

EDITED BY

O. W. WIGHT.

Viresque acquirit eundo.

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MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYS.

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CHAPTER XXXVII.

OF THE RESEMBLANCE OF CHILDREN TO THEIR FATHERS.

THIS fagoting up of so many divers pieces is done in this way: I never set pen to paper but when too great idleness becomes troublesome, and never anywhere but at home; so that it is made up at several interruptions and intervals, occasions keeping me sometimes many months abroad.[1] As to the rest I never correct my first by any second conceptions; perhaps I may alter a word or so; but 'tis only to vary the phrase, and not to omit my former meaning.[2] I have a mind to represent the progress of my humour, that every one may see every piece as it came from the forge. I could wish I had begun sooner, that I might see more the course of my mutations. A servant of mine, that I employed to transcribe for me, thought he had got a prize by stealing several pieces from me, such as he took a fancy to; but it is my comfort that he will be no greater a gainer than I shall

[1] This chapter was written by Montaigne after his return from his journey through Switzerland, Germany, and Italy, on which he had been absent seventeen months.

[2] Yet the edition of 1588 contains several passages which Montaigne afterwards greatly altered or entirely omitted, to the advantage, certainly, of his work.

be a loser by the theft. I am grown older by seven or eight years since I began; which has not been without some new acquisition; I have in that time become acquainted with the stone, by the liberality of years, a long conversation with which hardly wears off without some such inconvenience. I could have been glad that of other presents age has to present long-lived men, withal it had chosen one that would have been more welcome to me, for it could not possibly have laid upon me a disease, for which, even from my infancy, I have had so great a horror; and it is in truth, of all the ills of old age, that of which I have ever been most afraid. I have often thought, with myself, that I went on too far, and that in so long a voyage I should at last run myself into some disadvantage; I perceived, and often declared, that it was time to knock off, and that death was to be cut out in the sound and living part, according to the surgeons' rule in amputations; and that nature made him pay very strict usury who did not in due time pay the principal. And yet I was so far from being ready that, in eighteen months' time, or thereabout, that I have been in this uneasy condition, I have so inured myself to it as to be content to live on in it; and have found wherein to comfort myself, and to hope; so much are men enslaved to their miserable being that there is no condition so wretched that they will not accept, provided they may live! Hear Mecænas:—

Montaigne's patience in the disease which he always dreaded.

> Debilem facito manu,
> Debilem pede, coxa;
> Lubicros quate dentes;
> Vita dum superest, bene est;[1]

> "Maim both my hands and feet, break legs and thighs,
> Knock out my teeth, and bore out both my eyes,
> Let me but live, all's well enough, he cries."

And Tamerlane, with a foolish humanity, palliated the fantastic cruelty he exercised upon lepers, when he put all he

[1] Mæcenas, *apud* Seneca, *Ep.* 101.

could hear of to death, to deliver them, as he pretended, from the painful life they lived; for there was not one of them who would not rather have undergone a triple leprosy than to be deprived of their being; and Antisthenes the Stoic[1] being very sick, and crying out, "Who will deliver me from these evils?" Diogenes, who was come to visit him: "This," said he, presenting him a knife, "presently, if thou wilt." "I do not mean from my life," he replied, "but from my disease."[2] The sufferings that only attack the mind I am not so sensible of as most other men; partly out of judgment, for the world looks upon several things as dreadful, or to be avoided at the expense of life, that are almost indifferent to me; partly through a stupid and insensible complexion I have, in evils which do not point-blank hit me; which insensibility I look upon as one of the best parts of my natural condition; but essential and corporeal pains, I am very sensible of. And yet having long since foreseen them, though with a sight weak and delicate, and softened with the long and happy health and quiet that God has been pleased to give me the greatest part of my time, I had in my imagination fancied them so insupportable that in truth I felt the fear of them more than I have since felt actual pain from them; by which I am still more fortified in this belief, that most of the faculties of the soul, as we employ them, more trouble the repose of life than they are any way useful to it.

The stone the most painful of all diseases.

I am in conflict with the worst, the most sudden, the most painful, the most mortal, and the most irremediable of all diseases; I have already had the trial of five or six very long and very painful fits, and yet I either flatter myself, or there is even in this estate what is very well to be endured by a man who has his soul free from the fear of death, and the menaces, conclu-

[1] Or rather the Cynic, of which sect he was the head, though in the main, there is no great difference betwixt the two sects as to their doctrine.

[2] Diog. Laertius, in the life of Antisthenes, vi. 18.

sions, and consequences, which physic is ever thundering in our ears. But the effect, even of pain itself, is not so sharp and intolerable as to put a man of understanding into impatience and despair. I have at least this advantage from my stone, that what I could not hitherto wholly prevail upon myself to resolve upon, as to reconciling and acquainting myself with death, it will perfect; for the more it presses upon and importunes me, I shall be so much the less afraid to die. I had already gone so far as only to love life for life's sake, but my pain will dissolve this intelligence; and God grant that in the end, should the sharpness of it be once greater than I shall be able to bear, it does not throw me into the other less vicious extreme, to desire and wish to die!

Summum nec metuas diem, nec optes: [1]

"Neither to wish nor fear to die;"

they are two passions to be feared, but the one has its remedy much nearer at hand than the other.

Complaint may freely be indulged in the agony of pain.

As to the rest, I have always found the precept that so exactly enjoins so firm a countenance, and so disdainful and indifferent a comportment in the toleration of infirmities, to be merely ceremonial. Why should philosophy, which only has respect to life and its effects, trouble itself about these external appearances? Let us leave that care to actors and masters of rhetoric, that set so great a value upon our gestures: let her, in God's name, allow this vocal frailty, if it be neither cordial nor stomachical, to the disease; and permit the ordinary ways of expressing grief by sighs, sobs, palpitations, and turning pale, that nature has put out of our power; provided the courage be undaunted, and the expressions not sounding of despair, let her be satisfied. What matter is it if we wring our hands, if we do not wring our thoughts? She forms us for ourselves, not for others; to be, not to seem; let her be satisfied with governing our understandings, which

[1] Mart. x. 47.

she has taken upon her the care of instructing; in the fury of the stone let her maintain the soul in a condition to know itself, and to follow its accustomed way, contending with, and enduring, not meanly truckling under pain; moved and heated, not subdued and conquered in the contention; capable of discourse and other things to a certain degree. In so extreme ills, 'tis cruelty to require so exact a composedness; 'tis no great matter what faces we make, if we find any ease by it; if the body find itself relieved by complaining, let it complain; if agitation eases him, let him tumble and toss at pleasure; if he finds the disease evaporate (as some physicians hold that it helps women in delivery), extremely to cry out, or, if it do but amuse his torments, let him roar. We need not command his voice to sally, let us but stop it not. Epicurus[1] not only forgives his sage for crying out in torments, but advises him to it: *Pugiles etiam, quum feriunt, in jactandis cæstibus ingemiscunt, quia profundenda voce omne corpus intenditur, venitque plaga vehementior.*[2] "When men fight with the cœstus they groan out in laying on, because the whole strength of body goes along with the voice, and the blow is laid on with greater force." We have enough to do to deal with the disease, without troubling ourselves with these superfluous rules.

Montaigne kept his temper in the height of his pain.

This I say in excuse of those whom we ordinarily see impatient in the assaults of this malady; for as to what concerns myself, I have passed it over hitherto with a little better countenance, and contented myself with grunting, without roaring out. Not, nevertheless, that I put any great constraint upon myself to maintain this exterior decency, for I make little account of such an advantage; I allow herein as much as the pain requires; but either my pains are not so excessive, or I have more than ordinary patience. I complain, I confess, and am a little impatient in a very sharp fit, but I do not arrive to such a degree of despair as he who—

1 Laertius, *in Vitâ*

2 Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* ii. 23.

Ejulata, questu, gemitu, fremitibus
Resonando, multum flebiles voces refert:[1]

"Howling, roaring, and a thousand groans,
Express'd his torment in most dismal tones:"

I relish myself in the midst of my dolor; and have always found that I was in a capacity to speak, think, and give a rational answer, as well as at any other time, but not so coldly and indifferently, being troubled and interrupted by the pain. When I am looked upon by my visitors to be in the greatest torment, and that they therefore forbear to trouble me, I often try my own strength, and myself set some discourse on foot, the most remote I can contrive from my present condition. I can do any thing upon a sudden endeavour, but it must not continue long. What pity 'tis I have not the faculties of that dreamer Cicero, who, dreaming he was lying with a wench, found he had discharged his stone in the sheets![2] My pains do strangely disappetite me that way. In the intervals from this excessive torment, when my ureters only languish without any great dolor, I presently feel myself in my wonted state, forasmuch as my soul takes no other alarm but what is sensible and corporeal, which I certainly owe to the care I have had of preparing myself by meditation against such mishaps:—

Laborum
Nulla mihi nova nunc facies inopinave surgit:
Omnia præcepi, atque animo mecum ante peregi.[3]

"No face of pain or labour now can rise
Which, by its novelty, can me surprise,
I've been accustom'd all things to explore,
And been inured unto them long before."

I am, however, a little roughly handled for a learner, and with a sudden and sharp alteration, being fallen in an instant from a very easy and happy condition of life into the most uneasy and painful that can be imagined; for, besides that it is a disease very much to be feared in itself, it begins with

[1] Attius, *Philoctetes*, *apud* Cicero, *de Finib.* ii. 29.
[2] Cicero, *de Divin.* ii. 69.
[3] *Æneid*, vi. 103

me after a more sharp and severe manner than it uses to do with other men; my fits come so thick upon me that I am scarcely ever at ease. Yet I have hitherto kept my mind so upright that, provided I can still continue it, I find myself in a much better condition of life than a thousand others who have no fever, nor other disease but what they create themselves from defect in their reason.

There is a certain sort of crafty humility that springs from presumption, as this. That we confess our ignorance in many things, and are so courteous as to acknowledge that there are in the works of nature some qualities and conditions that are imperceptible to us, and of which our understanding cannot discover the means and causes; by this honest and conscientious declaration we hope to obtain that people shall also believe us in those that we say we do understand. We need not trouble ourselves to seek out miracles and strange difficulties; methinks there are such incomprehensible wonders amongst the things that we ordinarily see, as surpass all difficulty of miracles. What a wonderful thing it is that the drop of seed from which we are produced should carry in itself the impression, not only of the bodily form, but even of the thoughts and inclinations of our fathers? Where can that drop of fluid matter contain that infinite number of forms? And how can they carry on these resemblances, with so temerarious and irregular a progress that a son shall be like his great-grandfather, the nephew like his uncle? In the family of Lepidus, at Rome, there were three, not successively, but by intervals, that were born with the same eye covered with a cartilage.[1] At Thebes there was a race that carried from their mother's womb the form of the head of a lance, and who was not born so was looked upon as illegitimate.[2] And Aristotle says that in a certain nation, where the women were in common, they assigned the children to their fathers by their resemblance.[3]

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 12.

[2] A people of Lybia. Herodotus, iv. 180.

[3] Plutarch, *On those of whom the Gods defer the punishment;* who however says nothing about the reputed illegitimacy of those born without the lance-mark.

The author's father afflicted with the stone.

'Tis to be believed that I derive this infirmity from my father; for he died wonderfully tormented with a great stone in his bladder. He was never sensible of his disease till the sixty-seventh year of his age, and before that had never felt any grudging or symptoms of it, either in his reins, sides, or any other part; and had lived till then in a happy and vigorous state of health, little subject to infirmities, and continued seven years after in this disease, and died a very painful lingering death. I was born above five-and-twenty years before his disease seized him, and in the time of his most flourishing and healthful state of body, his third child in order of birth. Where could his propensity to this disease lie lurking all that while? And he being so far from the infirmity, how could that small part of his substance carry away so great an impression for its share? And how so concealed that, five-and-forty years after, I began to be sensible of it, the only one to this hour, amongst so many brothers and sisters, and all of one mother, that was ever troubled with it. He that can satisfy me in this point, I will believe him in as many other miracles as he pleases; always provided that, as their manner is, he does not give me a doctrine much more intricate and fantastic than the thing itself, for current pay.

His contempt of physic.

Let the physicians a little excuse the liberty I take; for by the same infusion and fatal insinuation it is, that I have received a hatred and contempt of their doctrine; the antipathy I have against their art is hereditary. My father lived threescore and fourteen years, my grandfather sixty-nine, my great-grandfather almost fourscore years, without ever tasting any sort of physic; and with them whatever was not ordinary diet, served instead of a drug. Physic is grounded upon experience and examples; so is my opinion. And is not this an express and very advantageous experience? I do not know that they can find me, in all their records, three that were born, bred, and died under the same roof, who have lived so long under their conduct. They

must here of necessity confess that if reason be not, fortune at least is, on my side; and with physicians fortune goes a great deal further than reason. Let them not take me now at a disadvantage, let them not threaten me in the subdued condition I now am in; for that were treachery. And, to say truth, I have got enough the better of them, by these domestic examples, that they should rest satisfied. Human things are not usually so constant; it has been two hundred years, save eighteen, that this trial has lasted, for the first of them was born in the year 1402; 'tis now indeed very good reason that this experiment should begin to fail us. Let them not therefore reproach me with the infirmities which have me now by the throat; is it not enough for my part that I have lived seven and forty years in perfect health; though it should be the end of my career, 'tis of the longer sort. My ancestors had an aversion to physic by some secret and natural instinct; for the very sight of a potion was loathsome to my father. The Seigneur de Gaviac, my uncle by the father's side, a churchman, and a valetudinarian from his birth, and who yet made that crazy life to hold out sixty-seven years, being once fallen into a furious fever, it was ordered by the physicians he should be plainly told that if he would not make use of help (for so they call that which is often quite contrary), he would infallibly be a dead man. The good man, though terrified with this dreadful sentence, yet replied, "I am then a dead man." But God soon after made the prognostic false. The youngest brother, there were four, and by many years the youngest, the Sieur de Bussaguet, was the only man of the family that made use of medicine, by reason, I suppose, of the commerce he had with the other arts, for he was a counsellor in the court of parliament; and it succeeded so ill with him, that, being in outward appearance of the strongest constitution, he yet died before any of the rest, the Sieur de St. Michel only excepted.

'Tis possible I may have derived this natural antipathy to physic from them; but, had there been no other consideration

His reason for making so very light of physic.

in the case, I would have endeavoured to have overcome it; for all those conditions that spring in us without reason are vicious; and is a kind of disease that we are to wrestle with. It may be I had this propensity naturally, but I have supported and fortified it by arguments and reasons, which have established me in the opinion I am of; for I also hate the consideration of refusing physic for the nauseous taste; I should hardly be of that humour, thinking health worth purchasing by all the most painful cauteries and incisions that can be applied; and, according to Epicurus, I conceive that pleasures are to be avoided, if greater pains be the consequence; and pains to be coveted, that will terminate in greater pleasures.[1] Health is a precious thing, and indeed the only one meriting that a man should lay out not only his time, sweat, labour, and goods, but also his life itself to obtain it; forasmuch as without it life is painful and injurious to us; pleasure, wisdom, learning, and virtue, without it wither away and vanish; and in the most quaint and solid discourses that philosophy would imprint in us to the contrary, we need no more but oppose the image of Plato being struck with an epilepsy or apoplexy, and in this supposition to defy him to call the rich faculties of his soul to his assistance. All means that conduce to health can neither be too painful nor too dear for me. But I have some other appearances that make me strangely suspect all this merchandise. I do not deny but there may be some art, and that there are, amongst so many works of nature, things proper for the conservation of health; that is most certain; I very well know that there are some simples that moisten, and others that dry; I experimentally know that radishes are windy, and senna leaves purging; and several other experiences I have, as I know that mutton nourishes, and wine warms me; and Solon said[2] that eating was like other drugs, physic against hunger; I do not disapprove the

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 33. Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

[2] Or rather Plutarch, who makes Solon say it, in *The Banquet of the Seven Sages.*

use we make of things the earth produces, nor doubt in the least of the power and fertility of nature, and its application to our necessities; I very well see that pikes and swallows live by her laws; but I mistrust the inventions of our wit, knowledge, and art; to countenance which we have abandoned nature and her rules, and wherein we keep no bounds nor moderation. As we call the mixture of the first laws that fall into our hands, Justice, and their practice and dispensation very foolish and very unjust; and as those who scoff at and accuse it, cannot, nevertheless, insult that noble virtue, but only condemn the abuse and profanation of that sacred title; so in physic I very much honour that glorious name, and the end it is studied for, and what it promises to the service of mankind; but what it foists upon us I neither honour nor esteem.

In the first place, experience makes me dread it; for amongst all my acquaintance, I see no set of people so soon sick, and so long before they are well, as those who take much physic; their very health is altered and corrupted by their frequent prescriptions. Physicians are not content to deal only with the sick, but they will moreover corrupt health, for fear men should at any time escape their authority. Do they not, from a continual and perfect health, extract suspicion of some great sickness to ensue? I have been sick often enough, and have always found my sickness easy enough to be supported (though I have made trial of almost all sorts), and as short as those of any other, without their help, or without swallowing their ill-tasting doses. My health is full and free, without other rule or discipline than my own custom and pleasure; every place serves me well enough to stay in, for I need no other conveniences when sick than what I must have when I am well. I never disturb myself that I have no physician, or apothecary, or any other assistance, which I see most other sick men more afflicted at than they are with their disease! What! do they themselves show us more

felicity and duration in their own lives, that may manifest to us some apparent effect of their skill?

Physic unknown to many nations.

There is not a nation in the world that has not been many ages without physic; and the first age, that is to say, the best and most happy, knew no such thing; and the tenth part of the world knows nothing of it yet. Several nations are ignorant of it to this day, where men live more healthful and longer than we do here, and even amongst us the common people live well enough without it. The Romans were six hundred years before they received it;[1] and after having made trial of it, banished it from their city, at the instance of Cato the Censor, who made it appear how easy it was to live without it, having himself lived fourscore and five years, and kept his wife alive to an extreme old age, not without physic, but without a physician;[2] for every thing that we find to be healthful to life may be called physic. He kept his family in health, as Plutarch says, if I mistake not, with hares, as Pliny reports[3] that the Arcadians cured all manner of diseases with the milk of a cow; and Herodotus says,[4] "The Lybians generally enjoy a rare health, by a custom they have, after their children are arrived at four years of age, to burn and cauterize the veins of their head and temples, by which means they cut off all defluxions of rheums for their whole lives."[5] And the country people of our province make use of nothing, in all sorts of distempers, but the strongest wine they can get, mixed with a great deal of saffron and spice, and all with the same success.

[1] Montaigne might very well assure us, upon the authority of Pliny, xxix. 1, that the Romans did not admit of physic till six hundred years after the foundation of Rome; and that, after they had made trial of the art, they condemned and banished the physicians from their city; but, as to his addition, that they were expelled at the instance of Cato the Censor, Pliny is so far from authorizing it that he expressly says, the Romans did not banish the physicians from their city till long after the death of Cato. Several modern writers have fallen into the same error as Montaigne, as may be seen in Bayle's *Dictionary*, under the article "Porcius," in the note H.

[2] In the *Life of Cato the Censor*, c. 12.

[3] *Nat. Hist.* xxv. 8.

[4] Lib. iv. c. 187.

[5] Montaigne should have said, by which means they propose to cut off such defluxions. &c., for though Herodotus says they do it with this view, yet he does not presume to say that for this cause, they enjoy such perfect health. "It is true," says he, "the Lybians are more healthy than any people that I know, but that this is the cause of it, I cannot affirm positively."

And to say the truth, of all this diversity and confusion of apothecaries' jargon what other end and effect is there after all, but to purge the belly? which a thousand ordinary simples will do as well; and I do not know whether such evacuations be so much to our advantage as they pretend, and whether nature does not require a residence of her excrements to a certain proportion, as wine does of its lees, to keep it alive; you often see healthful men fall into vomitings and fluxes of the belly, by unknown accidents, and make a great evacuation of excrements, without any preceding need, or any following benefit, but rather with hurt to their constitution. 'Tis from the great Plato[1] that I lately learned that, of three sorts of motions which are natural to us, purging is the worst; and that no man, unless he be a fool, ought to take any thing to that purpose, but in the extremest necessity. Men disturb and irritate the disease by contrary opposition; it must be the way of living that must gently dissolve and bring it to its maturity. The violent gripings and contest betwixt the drug and the disease is ever to our loss, since the combat is fought within ourselves, and that the drug is an assistant not to be trusted, being by its own nature an enemy to our health; and, but by trouble, has no access into our condition. Let it alone a little; the Providence that takes care of fleas and moles, does also take care for men, if they will have the same patience fleas and moles have, to leave it to itself; 'tis to much purpose that we cry, Get on! 'Tis the way to make us hoarse, but not to hasten it. 'Tis a proud and uncompassionate order; our fears, our despair, displease and stop it from, instead of inviting it to, our relief. It owes assistance to the disease as well as to health, and will not suffer itself to be corrupted in favour of the one, to the prejudice of the other's right, for it would then fall into disorder. Let us, in God's name, follow it; it leads those that follow, and those who will not follow, it drags along, with their fury and physic

Whether the usefulness of medicinal purges is warranted upon good grounds.

[1] In the *Timæus*.

together. Order a purge for your brain; it will there be much better employed than upon your stomach.

One asking a Lacedemonian what had made him live so long, he made answer, "The ignorance of physic." And the Emperor Adrian continually exclaimed, as he was dying, that the crowd of physicians had killed him.[1] An ill wrestler turned physician: "Courage," says Diogenes to him,[2] "thou hast done well, for now thou wilt throw those who have formerly thrown thee." But they have this advantage, according to Nicocles,[3] that the sun gives light to their success, and the earth covers their failures. And, besides, they have a very advantageous way of making use of all sorts of events; for what fortune, nature, or any other causes (of which the number is infinite), produce of good and healthful in us, it is the privilege of physic to attribute to itself; all the happy success that happens to the patient must be derived thence; the occasions that have cured me, and thousands of others who make no use of medicine, physicians usurp to themselves and their own skill; and as to all mishaps, they either absolutely disown them, in laying the fault upon the patient, by such frivolous and idle reasons as they can never be to seek for; as, he lay with his arms out of bed, or he was disturbed by the rattling of a coach,—

> Rhedarum transitus arcto
> Vicorum in flexu;[4]
>
> "Rumbling wheels that meet
> In every winding of the narrow street:"

or, somebody had opened the casement, or he had lain upon his left side; or had had some odd fancies in his head; in sum, a word, a dream, or a look, seem to them excuse sufficient wherewith to discharge themselves from error; or, if

[1] Xiphilin, *Epitome.* Dion. *Life of Adrian.* Before Adrian, however, Pliny (*Nat. Hist.* xxix. 1,) mentions a tomb with this epitaph: *Turba se medicorum periisse.*

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

[3] In p. 652, chap. cxlvi. of the *Collection of the Monks Antony and Maximus*, printed at the end of *Stobæus.* Barbeyrac thinks that this Nicocles, who here banters a certain quack, is the famous king of Salamina, to whom Socrates addressed one of his orations.

[4] Juvenal, iii. 236.

they so please, they yet make use of our growing worse, and do their business that way, which can never fail them; which is, by buzzing us in the ears, when the disease is more inflamed by their medicaments, that it had been much worse but for those remedies. He who, from an ordinary cold, they have thrown into a quotidian fever ague, had, but for them, been in a continuous one. They do not much care what mischief they do, since it turns to their own profit. Truly, they have reason to require a very favourable belief from their patients; and indeed it ought to be a very easy one, to swallow things so hard to be believed. Plato said very well,[1] that physicians were the only men that might lie at pleasure, since our health depends upon the vanity and falsity of their promises. Æsop, a most excellent author, and of whom few men discover all the graces, pleasantly represents to us the tyrannical authority physicians usurp over poor creatures, weakened and subdued by sickness and fear; for he tells us,[2] that a sick person, being asked by his physician what operation he found of the potion he had given him? "I have sweated very much," says the sick man. "That's good," says the physician. Another time, having asked him how he felt himself after his physic? "I have been very cold, and have had a great shivering upon me," said he. "That is good," replied the physician. After the third potion, he asked him again how he did? "Why, I find myself swelled and puffed up," said he, "as if I had a dropsy." "That is very well," said the physician. One of his servants coming presently after to inquire how he felt himself? "Truly, friend," said he, "with being too well, I am about to die."

There was a more just law in Egypt, by which the physician for the three first days was to take charge of his patient at the patient's own peril and fortune; but those three days being past, it was to be at his own. For what should their

[1] In the *Republic*, iii.

[2] In *The Sick Man and the Physician.*

patron Æsculapius be struck with a thunder-bolt for restoring Hyppolitus from death to life;—

> Nam pater omnipotens, aliquem indignatus ab umbris
> Mortalem infernis ad lumina surgere vitæ,
> Ipse repertorem medicinæ talis, et artis,
> Fulmine Phæbigenam Stygias detrusit ad undas;[1]

> "But Jove, who saw from high with just disdain
> The dead inspired with vital breath again,
> Struck to the centre with his flaming dart
> Th' unhappy founder of the godlike art;"

and his followers be pardoned, who send so many souls from life to death? A physician boasting to Nicocles that his art was of great authority: "It is so, indeed," said Nicocles, "that can with impunity kill so many people."[2]

Mystery very necessary for physic.

As to what remains, had I been of their counsel, I would have rendered my discipline more sacred and mysterious; they begun well, but they have not ended so. It was a good beginning to make gods and demons the authors of their science, and to have used a peculiar way of speaking and writing; notwithstanding that philosophy concludes it folly to persuade a man to his own good in an unintelligible way: *Ut si quis medicus imperet, ut sumat*

> Terrigenam, herbigradam, domiportam, sanguine cassum.[3]

"As if a physician should command his patient to take an animal trailing with its slime over the herbage, without blood or bones, and carrying its house upon its back." It was a good rule in their art, and which accompanies all other vain, fantastic, and supernatural arts, that the patients' belief should prepossess them with good hope and assurance of their effects and operation; a rule they hold to that degree as to maintain that the most inexpert and ignorant physician is more proper for a patient that has confidence in him, than the most learned and experienced, that he is not acquainted with. Nay, even

[1] *Æneid*, vii. 770.

[2] *Collection of the Monks Antony and Maximus.*

[3] "Instead of saying, as everybody else says, a snail," adds Cicero, *de Divin.* ii. 64.

the choice of most of their drugs is in some sort mysterious and quackish. The left foot of a tortoise, the urine of a lizard, the dung of an elephant, the liver of a mole, blood drawn from under the wing of a white pigeon; and for us who have the stone (so scornfully they use us in our miseries), the excrement of rats beaten to powder, and such-like apes' tricks, which rather carry a face of magical enchantment than any solid science. I omit the odd number of their pills, the appointment of certain days and feasts of the year, the superstition of gathering their simples at certain hours, and that austere, grim countenance and haughty carriage which Pliny himself derides. But they have, as I said, failed, in that they have not added to this fine beginning, the making their meetings and consultations more religious and secret; no profane person ought to be admitted there, no more than in the secret ceremonies of Æsculapius; for by reason of this it falls out that their irresolution, the weakness of their arguments, divinations, and foundations, the sharpness of their disputes,[1] full of hatred, jealousy, and particular interests, coming to be discovered by every one, a man must be very blind not to discern that he runs a very great hazard in their hands. Whoever saw one physician use another's prescription, without taking something away or adding something to it? By which they sufficiently betray their art, and make it manifest to us that they therein more consider their own reputation, and consequently their profit, than their patients' interest. He was a much wiser man of their tribe, who of old gave it for a rule, that only one physician should undertake a sick person; for if he do nothing to purpose, one single man's default can bring no great scandal upon the profession; and, on the contrary, the glory will be great if he happen to have success; whereas, when they are many, they at every turn bring a disrepute upon their calling, forasmuch as they often do more hurt than good. They ought to be satisfied with the perpetual disagreement which is found in the opin-

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxix. 1.

ions of the principal masters and ancient authors of this science, which is only known to men well read, without discovering to the vulgar the controversies and various judgments which they still nourish and continue amongst themselves.

The opposite sentiments of physicians as to the cause of diseases, a proof of the uncertainty of their science.

Will you have one example of the ancient controversies in physic? Herophilus[1] lodges the original cause of all diseases in the humours; Erasistratus, in the blood of the arteries; Asclepiades, in the invisible atoms of the pores; Alcmeon, in the exuberance or defect of our bodily strength; Diocles in the equality of the elements of which the body is composed, and in the quality of the air we suck in; Strato, in the abundance, crudity, and corruption of the nourishment we take; and Hippocrates lodges them in the spirits. There is a certain friend of theirs,[2] whom they know better than I, who declares upon this subject, "That the most important science in practice amongst us, as that which is intrusted with our health and conservation, is by ill luck the most uncertain, the most perplexed, and agitated with the greatest mutations." There is no great danger in being mistaken as to the height of the sun, or the fraction of some astronomical supputation; but here, where our whole being is concerned, 'tis no wisdom to abandon ourselves to the mercy of the agitation of so many contrary winds.

Physic, when and by whom brought into credit.

Before the Peloponnesian war there was no great talk of this science.[3] Hippocrates brought it into repute; whatever he established Chrysippus overthrew; after that Erasistratus, Aristotle's grandson, overthrew what Chrysippus had written; after these, the empirics started up, who took a quite contrary way to the ancients in the management of this art. When the credit of these began to decay, Herophilus set another sort of practice on foot, which Asclepiades in turn stood up

[1] Celsus, *Preface to the First Book.*
[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxix. 1.
[3] Id. *ib.* xxix. whence the following details respecting ancier medicine are taken.

against and overthrew. The opinion first of Themison, and then of Musa; and after that, those of Vectius Valens, a physician famous through the intelligence he had with Messalina, came in vogue; the empire of physic in Nero's time fell to Thessalus, who abolished and condemned all that had been held till his time; his doctrine was refuted by Crinas of Marseilles, who brought all medicinal operations under the ephemerides and motions of the stars, and reduced eating, sleeping, and drinking to hours that were most pleasing to Mercury and the moon. His authority was soon after supplanted by Charinus, a physician of the same city of Marseilles; a man that not only controverted all the ancient methods of physic, but moreover the use of hot baths, that had been generally and so many ages before in common use; he made men bathe in cold water even in winter, and plunged his sick patients in the natural waters of the stream. No Roman till Pliny's time had ever vouchsafed to practise physic; that office was only performed by Greeks and foreigners, as 'tis now amongst us in French, by those that sputter Latin; for, as a great physician says, "We do not readily receive the medicine we understand, any more than we do the drugs we ourselves gather." If the nations from which we fetch our guaicum, sarsaparilla, and china root, be conversant with medicine, how great a value must we imagine, by the same recommendation of strangeness, rarity, and dear purchase, they set upon our cabbage and parsley? For who would dare to contemn things so far fetched, and at the hazard of so long and dangerous a voyage?

Since these ancient mutations in physic, there have been infinite others down to our own times; and, for the most part, such as have been entire and universal; as those, for example, produced by Paracelsus, Fioravanti, and Argenterius; for they, as I am told, not only altered recipes, but the whole contexture and rules of the body of physic, accusing all others of ignorance and imposition that practised before them. Amongst them all, in what a condition the poor patient must be, I leave you to judge.

But if we were yet assured that when they mistake themselves, that mistake of theirs would do us no harm, though it did us no good, it were a reasonable bargain to venture making ourselves better, without danger of being made worse.[1] Æsop tells a story that one who had bought a Morisco slave, believing that his black complexion was accidental in him, and occasioned by the ill usage of his former master, caused him to enter into a course of physic, and with great care to be often bathed and purged; it happened that the Moor was nothing amended in his tawny complexion, but he wholly lost his former health. How often do we see physicians impute the death of their patients to one another? I remember that some years ago there was an epidemical disease, very dangerous, and for the most part mortal, that raged in the towns about us; the storm being over, which had swept away an infinite number of men, one of the most famous physicians of all the country, presently after published a book upon that subject, wherein, upon better thoughts, he confesses that the letting of blood in that disease was the principal cause of so many miscarriages. Moreover, their authors hold that there is no physic that has not something hurtful in it. And if even those of the best operation do in some measure offend us, what must those do that are totally misapplied? For my own part, though there were nothing else in the case, I am of opinion that to those that loath the taste of physic it must needs be a dangerous and prejudicial endeavour, to force it down at so incommodious a time and with so much aversion; and believe that it marvellously distempers a sick person, at a time when he has so much need of repose.

And besides this, if we but consider the occasions upon which they usually ground the cause of our diseases, they

[1] Paracelsus has already been mentioned. Leonard Fioravanti was a physician, alchemist, and charlatan, born at Bologna, who, after flourishing in great repute in Italy for some time, died in 1588. Jean Argentier, a man of a higher character, was born at Quiers in Piedmont, in 1513, and died at Turin, in 1572. He distinguished himself more especially by his attacks on Galen's principles.

are so nice, that I thence conclude a very little error in the dispensation of their drugs, may do a great deal of mischief. Now, if the mistake of a physician be so dangerous, we are but in a scurvy condition; for it is almost impossible but he must often fall into those mistakes; he had need of too many parts, considerations, and circumstances, rightly to adjust his design; he must know the sick person's complexion, his temperature, his humours, inclinations, actions, nay, his very thoughts and imaginations; he must be assured of the external circumstances, of the nature of the place, the quality of the air and season, the situation of the planets, and their influences; he must know, in the disease, the causes, prognostics, affections, and critical days; in the drugs, the weight, the power of working, the country, figure, age, and dispensation; and he must know how rightly to proportion and mix all these together, to beget a just and perfect symmetry; wherein, if there be the least error, if amongst so many springs there be but any one out of order, 'tis enough to destroy us. God knows of how great difficulty most of these things are to be understood. For, for example, how shall a physician find out the true sign of the disease, every disease being capable of an infinite number of indications? How many doubts and controversies have they amongst themselves upon the interpretation of urines! Otherwise, whence should the continual debates we see amongst them about the knowledge of the disease proceed? How would we excuse the error they so often fall into, of taking one thing for another? In the maladies I have had, were there never so little difficulty in the case, I never found three of one opinion; which I instance, because I love to introduce examples wherein I am myself concerned.

Physicians very subject to mistakes, and their pernicious consequences.

A gentleman at Paris was lately cut for the stone, by order of the physicians, in whose bladder there was found no more stone than in the palm of his hand; and in the same place, a bishop, who was my particular good friend, was

earnestly pressed by the major part of the physicians he consulted, to suffer himself to be cut, to which also, upon their credit, I used my interest to persuade him; when he was dead, and opened, it appeared that he had no stone, but only a disorder in the kidneys. They are least excusable for an error in this disease, by reason that it is in some sort palpable; and 'tis by that that I take surgery to be much more certain, by reason that it sees and feels what it does, and so goes less upon conjecture; whereas the physicians have no *speculum matricis*, by which to discover our brains, lungs, and liver.

Even the very promises of physic are incredible in themselves; for, being to provide against divers and contrary accidents, that often afflict us at one and the same time, and that have almost a necessary relation, as the heat of the liver and the coldness of the stomach, they will needs persuade us that, of their ingredients, one will heat the stomach, and the other cool the liver; one has its commission to go directly to the reins, nay, even to the bladder, without scattering its operations by the way, and is to retain its power and virtue, through all the stops and meanders, to the very place for the service of which it is designed, by its own occult property; another will dry the brain; another moisten the lungs. All these things being mixed in one potion, it is a kind of madness to imagine or hope that these differing virtues should separate themselves from one another in this mixture and confusion, to perform so many various errands; I should very much fear that they would either lose or change their tickets, and trouble one another's quarters. And who can imagine but that, in this liquid confusion, these faculties must corrupt, confound, and spoil one another? Besides that the making up of this medicine is intrusted to the skill and fidelity of another, to whose mercy we again abandon our lives?

The promises of the physicians generally incredible.

As we have doublet and breeches makers, distinct trades, to clothe us, and are so much the better fitted, being that

each of them meddles only with his own business, and has less to trouble his head withal than a tailor, that undertakes all; and as in matter of diet great persons, for their convenience, and to the end they may be better served, have cooks of distinct offices, some for soups and pottages, and others for roasting, which one cook, that should undertake the whole service, could not so well perform; so for our cures, the Egyptians [1] had reason to reject this general trade of a physician, and to divide the profession; to each peculiar disease, to every part of the body, a particular operator; for that part was more properly and with less confusion provided for, being they especially regarded only that. Ours are not aware that he who provides for all provides for nothing; and that the entire government of this microcosm is more than they are able to undertake. Whilst they were afraid of stopping a looseness, lest they should put him into a fever, they killed me a friend that was worth more than the whole pack of them put together.[2] They counterpoise their own divinations with the present evils, and because they will not cure the brain to the prejudice of the stomach, they offend both with their discordant and tumultuary drugs.

Weakness and uncertainty of the reasons on which the art of physic is grounded.

As to the variety and weakness of the reasons of this art, it is more manifest in this than in any other. Aperitive medicines are proper for a man subject to the stone, by reason that opening and dilating the passages, they help forward the slimy matter whereof gravel and the stone are engendered, and convey that downward which begins to harden and gather in the reins; aperitive things are dangerous for a man subject to the stone, by reason that opening and dilating the passage, they help forward toward the reins the matter proper to create the stone, which, by their own propension that way, being apt to seize it, 'tis not to be imagined but that a great deal of what has been so conveyed thither

1 Herodotus, ii. 84.

2 The author here again refers to Stephen de la Boëtie, who died of a dysentery in 1563.

must remain behind; moreover, if the medicine happen to meet any thing too large to be carried through all those narrow passages it must pass to be expelled, that obstruction, whatever it is, being stirred by these aperitive things, and thrown into those narrow passages, coming to stop them, will occasion a most certain and most painful death. They have the like consistency in the advices they give us for the regimen of life; it is good to make water often, for we experimentally see that, in letting it lie long in the bladder, we give it time to settle the sediment, which will concrete into a stone; it is not good to make water often, for the heavy excrements it carries along with it will not be voided without violence, as we see, by experience, that a torrent that runs with force washes the ground it rolls over, much clearer than the course of a slow and tardy stream. Likewise it is good to have often to do with women, for that opens the passages, and helps to evacuate gravel; it is not good to have often to do with women, because it heats, tires, and weakens the reins. It is good to bathe frequently in hot waters, forasmuch as that refreshes and mollifies the place where the gravel and stone lie; and it is also ill, by reason that this application of external heat helps the reins to bake, harden, and petrify the matter so disposed. For those who are at the bath, it is most healthful to eat little at night, to the end that the waters they are to drink the next morning may have the better operation upon an empty stomach; on the contrary, it is better to eat little at dinner, that it hinder not the operation of the waters, which is not yet perfect, and not to oppress the stomach so soon after the other labour, but leave the office of digestion to the night, which will much better perform it than the day, where the body and soul are in perpetual motion and action. Thus do they juggle and cant in all their discourses at our expense, and cannot give one proposition against which I cannot erect a contrary of equal force. Let them, then, no longer exclaim against those who in this trouble of sickness suffer themselves to be

gently guided by their own appetite and the advice of nature, and commit themselves to the common fortune.

The usefulness of baths.

I have seen, in my travels, almost all the famous baths of Christendom, and for some years past have begun to make use of them myself, for I look upon bathing as generally wholesome, and believe that we suffer no little inconveniences in our health, by having left off the custom that was generally observed in former times, almost by all nations, and is yet in many, of bathing every day; and I cannot imagine but that we are much the worse by having our limbs crusted and our pores stopped with dirt. And as to the drinking of them, fortune has, in the first place, rendered them not at all unacceptable to my taste; and, secondly, they are natural and simple, which at least carry no danger with them, though they do us no good; of which, the infinite crowd of people of all sorts of complexions that repair thither, I take to be a sufficient guaranty; and although I have not there observed any extraordinary and miraculous effects; but, on the contrary, having more narrowly than ordinary inquired into it, I have found all the reports of such operations that have been spread abroad in those places, ill-grounded and false, and those that believe them (as people are willing to be gulled in what they desire) deceived in them; yet I have seldom known any that have been made worse by those waters, and a man cannot honestly deny but that they beget a better appetite, help digestion, and do in some sort revive us, if we do not go too late, and in too weak a condition, which I would dissuade every one from doing; they have not the virtue to raise men from desperate and inveterate diseases, but they may help some light indisposition or prevent some threatening alteration. He who does not bring along with him so much cheerfulness as to enjoy the pleasure of the company he will there meet, and of the walks and exercises to which the beauty of the places in which baths for the most part are situated invites us, will doubtless lose the best and surest part of their effect. For this

reason I have hitherto chosen to go to those of the most pleasant situation, where there was the most convenience of lodging, provision, and company; as the baths of Banieres in France; those of Plombieres in the frontiers of Germany and Lorrain; those of Baden in Switzerland; those of Lucca in Tuscany; and especially those of Della Villa, which I have the most, and at several seasons, frequented.

Every nation makes a particular use of baths.

Every nation has particular opinions touching their use, and several rules and methods in using them, and all of them, according to what I have seen, almost of like effect. Drinking them is not at all received in Germany; for all diseases they bathe only, and will lie dabbling in the water almost from sun to sun. In Italy, where they drink nine days, they bathe at least thirty, and commonly drink the water mixed with some other drugs, to make it work the better; we are here ordered to walk to digest it; there they are kept in bed after taking it till it be wrought off, their stomachs and feet have continually hot cloths applied to them all the while; and as the Germans have a particular practice, generally to use cupping and scarification in the bath, so the Italians have their *doccie*, which are certain little streams of this hot water brought through pipes, with which they bathe an hour in the morning and as much in the afternoon, for a month together, either the head, stomach, or any other part where the malady lies. There are infinite other varieties of customs in every country, or rather there is hardly any manner of resemblance to one another. By which you may see that this part of physic, to which alone I have submitted, though the least depending upon art of all others, has yet a great share of the confusion and uncertainty everywhere else manifest in the profession.

The poets say whatever they please with greater emphasis and grace; witness these two epigrams:—

> Alcon hesterno signum Jovis attigit: ille
> Quamvis marmoreus, vim patitur medici.

Ecce hodie, jussus transferri ex æde vetusta,
Effertur, quamvis sit deus atque lapis.[1]

"Alcon[2] did yesterday Jove's statue touch,
Which, although marble, suffer'd by 't so much
That now to-day 'tis order'd that it shou'd
Be taken from th' old temple where it stood;
Which, as was need, without delay was done,
Although he was a god, and made of stone."

And the other,—

Lotus nobiscum est, hilaris cænavit; et idem
Inventus mane est mortuus Andragoras.
Tam subitæ mortis causam, Faustine, requiris?
In somnis medicum viderat Hermocratem.[3]

"Andragoras bath'd, supp'd, and went well to bed
Last night, but in the morning was found dead;
Would'st know, Faustinus, what was his disease?
He dreaming saw the quack, Hermocrates.

Upon which I will relate two stories:—

Two pleasant stories against the practice of lawyers and physicians.

The Baron of Caupene in Chalosse and I have betwixt us the advowson of a benefice of great extent, at the foot of our mountains, called Lahontan. It is with the inhabitants of this nook as 'tis said of those of the vale of Angrougne; they lived a life apart, their fashions, clothes, and manners distinct from other people; were ruled and governed by certain particular laws and customs received from father to son, to which they submitted, without other constraint than the reverence to custom. This little state had continued from all antiquity in so happy a condition that no neighbouring judge was ever put to the trouble of inquiring into their doings, no advocate ever retained to give them counsel, nor stranger ever called in to compose their differences, nor was ever any of them seen to beg. They avoided all alliances and traffic with the other world, that they might not corrupt the purity of their own government; till, as they say, one of them, in the memory of their fathers, having a mind spurred on with noble ambition, contrived, in order to bring his name into credit and reputation,

[1] Ausonius, *Epig.* lxxiv. [2] A celebrated physician. [3] Martial, vi. 53.

to make one of his sons something more than ordinary; and having put him to learn to write, made him at last a village notary. This fellow, being thus puffed up, began to disdain their ancient customs, and to put into the people's ears the pomp of the other parts of the nation; the first prank he played was to advise a friend of his, whom somebody had offended by sawing off the horns of one of his goats, to make his complaint to the king's judges thereabout; and so he went on in this practice, till he spoiled all. In the tail of this corruption, they say, there happened another, and of worse consequence, by means of a physician, who took it into his head to marry one of their daughters, and to live amongst them. This man first of all began to teach them the name of fevers, rheums, and imposthumes, the seat of the heart, liver, and intestines, a science till then utterly unknown to them; and instead of garlic, with which they were wont to cure all manner of diseases, how painful or extreme soever, he taught them, though it were but for a cough, or any little cold, to take strange mixtures, and began to make a trade not only of their healths, but of their lives. They swear that till then they never perceived the evening air to be offensive to the head, that to drink when they were hot was hurtful, or that the winds of autumn were more unwholesome than those of the spring; that since this use of physic they find themselves oppressed with a legion of unaccustomed diseases, and that they perceive a general decay in their wonted vigour, and their lives cut shorter by the half. This is the first of my stories.

The other is, that before I was afflicted with the stone, hearing that the blood of a he-goat was with many in very great esteem, and looked upon as a celestial manna, rained down upon these latter ages for the good and preservation of the lives of men, and having heard it spoken of by men of understanding for an admirable drug, and of infallible operation; I, who have ever thought myself subject to all the accidents that can befall other men, had a mind, in

my perfect health, to furnish myself with this admirable medicine, and therefore gave order to have a goat fed at home, according to the receipt; for he must be taken in the hottest month of all summer, and must only have aperitive herbs given to eat, and white wine to drink. I came home by chance the very day he was to be killed; and one came and told me that the cook had found two or three great balls in his paunch, that rattled against one another amongst what he had eaten; I was curious to have all his entrails brought before me, where, having caused the skin that inclosed them to be cut, there tumbled out three great lumps, as light as sponges, so that they appeared to be hollow; but as to the rest, hard and firm without, spotted and mixed all over with various colours; one was perfectly round, and of the bigness of an ordinary bowl; and the other two something less, of an imperfect roundness, as seeming not to be arrived at their full growth. I find, by inquiry of people accustomed to open these animals, that it is a rare and unusual accident. 'Tis likely these are stones of the same nature with ours; and if so, it must needs be a very vain hope in those who have the stone, to extract their cure from the blood of a beast who was himself to die of the same disease. For to say that the blood does not participate of this contagion, and does not alter its wonted virtue, it is rather to be believed that nothing is engendered in a body but by the conspiracy and communion of all the parts; the whole mass works together, though one part contributes more than another, according to the diversity of operations; wherefore it is very likely that there was some petrifying quality in all the parts of this goat. It was not so much for fear of the future, and for fear of myself, that I was curious of this experiment, but because it falls out in mine, as it does in many other families, that the women store up such little trumpery drugs for the service of the people, using the same receipt in fifty several diseases, such a receipt as they will not take themselves, and yet triumph in their successes.

For the rest, I honour physicians, not, according to the precept,[1] for necessity (for to this passage may be opposed another of the prophet, reproving King Asa for having recourse to a physician [2]), but for themselves, having known many very good men of that profession, and most worthy to be beloved. I do not attack them; 'tis their art I inveigh against, and do not much blame them for making their advantage of our folly, for most men do the same. Many callings, both of greater and less dignity than theirs, have no other foundation or support than public abuse. When I am sick I send for them, if they be near, only to have their company, and fee them as others do. I give them leave to command me to keep myself warm, because I naturally love to do it; to appoint leeks or lettuce for my broth, and to order me white wine or claret, and so all other things at their own pleasure, which are indifferent to my palate and custom. I know very well that I do nothing for them in so doing, because sharpness and ill-pleasing tastes are incidents of the very essence of physic. Lycurgus ordered wine for the sick Spartans; why? Because they abominated the drinking of it when they were well; as a gentleman, a neighbour of mine, takes it for a rare medicine in his fever, because that naturally he mortally hates the taste. How many do we see amongst them of my humour, that despise taking of physic themselves, are men of liberal diet, and live a quite contrary sort of life to what they prescribe others? What is this, but flatly to abuse our simplicity? For their own lives and healths are no less dear to them than ours are to us, and consequently they would accommodate their effects to their own rules, if they did not themselves know how false they are.

Physicians worthy of esteem, and why.

Physicians seldom use medicinal drugs themselves.

'Tis the fear of death and pain, an impatience of the disease, and a violent and indiscreet desire of a present cure,

[1] *Honora medicum propter necessitatem.*—*Eccl.* xxxviii. 1.

[2] *Nec in infirmitate sua quæsivit Dominum, sed magis in medicorum arte confisus est.*—Paralipomen, ii. 16, 12.

that so blinds us; 'tis pure cowardice that makes our belief so pliable and easy to be imposed upon. And yet most men do not so much believe as they acquiesce and permit, for I hear them find fault and complain as well as we; but they resolve at last, "What should I do then?" As if impatience were of itself a better remedy than patience. Is there any one of those who have suffered themselves to be persuaded into this miserable subjection, that does not equally surrender himself to all sorts of impostures; who does not give up himself to the mercy of whoever has the impudence to promise him a cure? The Babylonians carried their sick into the public place, the physician was the people; every one that passed by being, in humanity and civility, obliged to inquire of their condition, and give some advice according to his own experience.[1] We do little better, there being no so silly a woman whose charms and quackeries we do not make use of, and according to my humour, if I were to take physic, I would sooner choose to take theirs than any other, because at least, if it does no good, it will do no harm. What Homer[2] and Plato said of the Egyptians, that they were all physicians, may be said of all nations; there is no person that does not boast of some rare recipe, and who will not venture it upon his neighbour, if he will permit him. I was the other day in company, where some one of my fraternity[3] told us of a new sort of pills, made up of a hundred and odd ingredients. It made us very merry, and was a singular consolation, for what rock could withstand so great a battery? And yet I hear, by those who made trial of it, that the least atom of gravel will not stir for it.

The sick persons of Babylon exposed in the market-place.

I cannot take my hand from the paper before I have added a word or two more concerning the assurance they give us of the infallibility of their drugs, and the experiments they have made. The greatest part, I think above two thirds, of the

Upon what the physicians found their pretended knowledge of the virtue of their drugs.

[1] Herod. i. 197. Strabo, xvi.
[2] *Odyssey*, iv. 231.
[3] Meaning that were troubled with the stone.

medicinal virtues, consist in the quintessence or occult property of simples, of which we can have no other instruction than use; for quintessence is no other than a quality of which we cannot, by our reason, find out the cause. In such proofs, those they pretend to have acquired by the inspiration of some demon, I am content to receive (for I meddle not with miracles); as also the proofs which are drawn from things that, upon some other account, often fall into use amongst us; as if in wool, wherewith we are wont to clothe ourselves, there have accidentally some occult desiccative property been found out of curing kibed heels, or as if in the radish we eat for food there have been found out some aperitive operation. Galen reports that a man happened to be cured of a leprosy by drinking wine out of a vessel into which a viper had crept by chance. In this example we find the means and a very likely guide and conduct to this experience, as we also do in those the physicians say they have been directed to by the example of some beasts; but in most of their other experiments, wherein they declare themselves to have been conducted by fortune, and to have had no other guide than chance, I find the progress of this information incredible. I take a man looking round about him upon the infinite number of things, plants, animals, and metals, and I do not know where he would begin his trial; and though his first fancy should fix him upon an elk's horn, wherein he must give a very gentle and easy belief, he will yet find himself perplexed in his second operation; there are so many maladies, and so many circumstances laid before him, that before he can arrive at the certainty of the point to which the perfection of his experience should arrive, human sense will be at the end of its lesson; and before he can, amongst this infinity of things, find out what this horn is; amongst so many diseases, what is epilepsy; the many complexions in a melancholic person, the many seasons in winter, the many nations in the French, the many ages in age, the many celestial mutations in the conjunction of Venus and Saturn, and the many parts in

man's body, nay, in a finger; being in all this directed neither by argument, conjectures, example, nor divine inspirations, but merely by the sole motion of fortune; it must be by a perfectly artificial, regular, and methodical fortune. And after the cure is performed, how can he assure himself that it was not because the disease was arrived at its period? or an effect of chance? or the operation of something the patient had eaten, drunk, or touched that day? or by virtue of his grandmother's prayers? And, moreover, had this experiment been perfect, how many times was it reiterated, and this long beadroll of fortunes and encounters strung anew from chance, to conclude a certain rule? And when the rule is concluded, by whom, I pray you? Of so many millions, there are but three men who take upon them to record their experiments. And must chance needs just meet one of these? What if another, and a hundred others, have made contrary experiments? We might, perhaps, have some light in this, were all the judgments and arguments of men known to us; but that three witnesses, three doctors, should lord it over all mankind is against all reason; it were fit that human nature should have deputed and culled them out, and that they were declared our controllers by express letters-patent.

To Madame de Duras.[1]

"MADAM,—The last time you came to see me you found me at work upon this chapter, and as these trifles may some time or other happen to fall into your ladyship's hands, I would have them bear witness of the great honour which the author will feel in any favour you shall please to show them. You will here find the same air and manner you have observed in his conversation. And though I could have borrowed some better and more favourable dress than my own, I would not have done it, for I require nothing more of these writings but to present me to your memory such as I natur-

1 Margaret de Grammont, widow of Jean de Durfort, Seigneur de Duras, from whose brother, James, is descended the family of the Dukes of Lorges

ally am. The same conditions and faculties your ladyship has been pleased to frequent and receive with much more honour and courtesy than they deserve, I will put together, but without alteration, in one solid body, that may perhaps continue some years, or some days, after I am gone; where you may find them again when you shall please to refresh your memory, without putting you to any greater trouble; neither are they worth it; I desire that you should continue the favour of your friendship to me by the same qualities by which it was acquired. I am not ambitious that any one should love and esteem me more dead than living. The humour of Tiberius [1] is ridiculous, but yet common, who was more solicitous to extend his renown to posterity, than to render himself acceptable to men of his own time. If I was one of those to whom the world could owe commendation, I would acquit the one half to have the other in hand, that their praises might come quick and crowding about me, more thick than long, more full than durable; and let them cease, in God's name, with my knowledge, and when the sweet sound can no longer pierce my ears. It would be an idle humour to go about, now that I am going to forsake the commerce of men, to offer myself to them by a new recommendation. I make no account of the goods I could not employ in the service of my life. And such as I am, I will be it elsewhere than on paper; my art and industry have been ever directed to render me good for something; and my studies to teach me to do, and not to write. I have made it my whole business to frame my life; this has been my trade and my work; I am less a writer of books than any thing else. I have coveted understanding for the service of my present and real conveniences, and not to lay up a stock for my posterity. He that has any thing of value in him, let him make it appear in his manners, in his ordinary discourses, in his courtships and

Montaigne preferred present esteem to that which is posthumous.

[1] *Quippe illi nota perinde curæ gratia præsentium, quam in posteros ambitio* Tacitus, *Annal*, vi. 46.

his quarrels, in play, in bed, at table, in the management of his affairs, in his domestic economy; those that I see make good books in ill breeches should first have mended their breeches, if they would have been ruled by me. Ask a Spartan whether he had rather be a good orator or a good soldier? And if I was asked the same question, I would rather choose to be a good cook, had I not one already to serve me. Good God! madam, how should I hate the reputation of being a pretty fellow at writing, and an ass and a sot in every thing else. Yet I had rather be a fool in any thing than to have made so ill a choice wherein to employ my talent. And I am so far from expecting to gain any new reputation by these follies, that I shall think I come off pretty well, if I lose nothing by them of that little I had before; for besides that this mute and dead painting will take from my natural being, it has no resemblance to my better condition, but is much lapsed from my former vigour and cheerfulness, and looks faded and withered. I am towards the bottom of the barrel, which begins to taste of the lees.

"And for the rest, madam, I should not have dared to make so bold with the mysteries of physic, considering the esteem that you and so many others have of it, had I not had encouragement from their own authors. I believe they have only two ancient Latin writers, Pliny and Celsus; if these ever fall into your hands, you will find that they speak much more rudely of their art than I do; I but pinch it, they cut its throat. Pliny,[1] amongst other things, twits them with this, that when they are at the end of the rope, that is, when they have done the utmost of what they are able to do, they have a pretty device to save themselves, of recommending their patients, whom they teased and tormented with drugs and diets to no purpose, some to vows and miracles, and others to hot baths. (Be not angry, madam; he speaks not of the baths in these parts which are under the protection of your house, and are altogether Gramontin.) They have,

[1] Pliny, xxix. 1.

besides, another way of saving their credit, of ridding their hands of us, and securing themselves from the reproaches we might cast in their teeth of our little amendment, when they have had us so long in their hands, that they have not one more invention left wherewith to amuse us; which is, to send us to the better air of some other country. This, madam, is enough; you will give me leave to return to my former discourse, from which I so far digressed, to have a little chat with you."

In what a condition he would be, if ever he put himself into the hands of the physicians.

It was, I think, Pericles, who being asked how he did? "You may judge," says he, "by these," showing some little amulets he had tied about his neck and arms.[1] By which he would infer that he must needs be very sick when he was reduced to having recourse to such idle and vain fopperies, and to suffering himself to be so furnished. I do not say I may not one day be so much a fool as to commit my life and health to the mercy and government of physicians. I may fall into such frenzy. I cannot answer for my future constancy; but then, if any one ask me how I do? I may also answer as Pericles did, "You may judge by this," showing my hand laden with six drams of opiate. It will be a very evident sign of a violent sickness; and my judgment will be very much out of order; if once fear and impatience get such an advantage over me, it may very well be concluded that there is a dreadful fever in my mind.

I have taken the pains to plead this cause, which I little enough understand, a little to back and support the natural aversion to drugs and the practice of physic, I have derived from my ancestors; to the end it may not be a mere stupid and temerarious aversion, but have a little more form; and also that they who shall see me so obstinate in my resolution against all exhortation and menaces that shall be given me, when my infirmity shall press hardest upon me, may not think 'tis mere obstinacy in me; or any one so ill-natured as

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 24.

to judge it to be any motive of glory; for it would be a strange ambition to seek to gain honour by an action my gardener or my groom can perform as well as I. Certainly I have not a heart so tumorous and windy that I should exchange so solid a pleasure as health for an airy and imaginary pleasure. Glory, even that of the four sons of Aymon, is too dear bought to a man of my humour, if it cost him three swinging fits of the stone. Give me health, in God's name! Such as love physic may also have great and convincing considerations; I do not hate opinions contrary to my own; I am so far from being angry to see a disagreement betwixt mine and other men's judgments, and from rendering myself unfit for the society of men, by being of another sense and party than mine, that on the contrary (the most general way that nature has followed being variety, and more in souls than bodies, forasmuch as they are of a more supple substance, and more susceptible of forms), I find it much more rare to see our humours and designs jump and agree. And there never was in the world two opinions alike, no more than two hairs or two grains; the most universal quality is diversity.

THE THIRD BOOK.

CHAPTER I.

OF PROFIT AND HONESTY.

No man is free from saying silly things; but the misfortune is when we endeavour to give them an air of importance:—

> Næ iste magno conatu magnas nugas dixerit.[1]
>
> "The man, in troth, with much ado,
> Has proved that one and one make two."

This no way regards me: mine escape me with as much indifference as they are little worth; and so much the better; I would immediately part with them for what they cost me, and neither buy nor sell them but according to their weight; I write as I speak in common conversation; and that this is true, I here give you an example.

Treachery rejected by Tiberius.

To whom ought not perfidy to be hateful, when even Tiberius himself refused it in an affair of the greatest importance to him? Advice was sent him from Germany that, if he thought fit, they would rid him of Arminius by poison;[2] Arminius, the greatest and most powerful enemy the Romans had to deal with, who had destroyed their legions under the conduct of Varus, and was the only obstacle to the enlargement of their dominions in that country. But Tiberius made answer, "That the Romans were used to take vengeance on their enemies by open and hon-

[1] Terent. *Heaut.* iii. 5, 8.

[2] Tacitus, *Annal*, ii. 88.

ourable means, with their swords in their hands, and not by fraud and deceit." Here utility and policy gave place to honesty. You will tell me that he was an impudent deceiver himself, and spoke contrary to his sentiments; I believe he did; it is no great miracle in men of his profession. But the acknowledgment due to virtue is not the less valid for being found in the mouth of a bad man; inasmuch as truth wrings it from him, and though he will not receive it in his heart, he at least wears it as a useful disguise.

Our outward and inward frame is full of imperfection; but there is nothing useless in nature, not even inutility itself; nothing having slipped into this universe that does not possess some proper place in it. Our being is cemented with sickly qualities; ambition, jealousy, envy, revenge, superstition, and despair, have so natural a possession in us, that the image is discerned in beasts; even that unnatural vice cruelty itself; for, though ever so compassionate, we feel within I know not what tart, sweet, malicious pleasure in seeing others suffer; children themselves feel it:—

> Suave mari magno, turbantibus æquora ventis,
> E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem:[1]

> "'Tis sweet from land to see a storm at sea,
> And others sinking, whilst ourselves are free:"

whoever should divest man of the seeds of these qualities would destroy the fundamental conditions of human life. So in all governments there are necessary offices, which are not only vile, but vicious too; vices have there a place, and help to make up the seam in our piecing, as poisons are useful for the preservation of health. If they become excusable because they are of use to us, and that the common necessity covers their true qualities, we are to resign this part to the most robust and least fearful of the people, who sacrifice their honour and conscience, as others of old sacrificed their lives for the good of their country; we who are weaker take upon us the parts that are both more

Vices necessary in all governments.

[1] Lucret. ii. 1.

easy and less hazardous. The public good requires that men should betray, and lie, and murder; but let us leave this commission to those that are more pliable and obedient.

Certes, I have often been vexed to see judges impudently making use of fraud and false hopes of pardon and favour to cozen a poor criminal into a confession of the fact alleged against him. It would become justice, and Plato himself, who countenances this manner of proceeding, to furnish me with other means more worthy of my approbation: this is a malicious justice, and I look upon it as no less violated by itself, than by others. I replied to one, not long since, that I who should hardly be drawn in to betray my prince for any private man, should be very much ashamed to betray any private man for my prince; and I do not only hate being a deceiver myself, but that any one should deceive me or others by my means; I will neither afford matter nor occasion to any such thing.

Montaigne a very tender conscienced negotiator.

In the little I have had to negotiate betwixt our princes,[1] in the divisions and subdivisions by which we are at this time torn to pieces, I have been very careful that they should neither be deceived in me, nor deceive others by me. People of that sort of trade are very reserved, and pretend to be the most moderate imaginable, and to chime in as much as possible with the opinion of those with whom they have to do; but, for my part, I show myself in my true opinion, and in a form as much my own as I can; a novice and raw negotiator, I had rather fail in the affair I am about, than be wanting to myself. And yet I have hitherto had the good luck (for fortune has doubtless the best share in it), that little has passed from hand to hand with less suspicion, or with more favour and secrecy. I have a free and open way that easily insinuates itself, and obtains belief with those with whom I am to deal, at the first meeting. Sincerity, and pure truth, in what age

[1] Between the King of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV. of France, and the Duke of Guise, Henry of Lorraine See De Thou, *de Vitâ Sua*, iii. 9.

soever, find their opportunity and advantage; and besides, the liberty and freedom of a man, who treats without any interest of his own, is never hateful or suspected; and he may very well make use of the answer of Hyperides to the Athenians, who complained of his harsh way of speaking to them: "Gentlemen, do not consider whether or no I am free-spoken, but whether I am so without a bribe, and without any advantage to my own affairs."[1] My freedom of speech has also easily acquitted me from all suspicion of dissembling; my vehemency leaving nothing unsaid, how home and bitter soever (so that I could not have said worse behind their backs), and carrying along with it a manifest show of simplicity and indifference. I pretend to no other fruit by acting than to act, and add to it no long windings-up nor proposals; every action plays its own game; win if it can.

As to the rest, I am not biassed by any passion, either of love or hatred towards the great, nor have my will fettered either by particular injury or obligation. I look upon our kings with an affection simply loyal and respectful, neither prompted on, nor restrained by, any private interest, and I love myself for it. Neither does the general or just cause attract me otherwise than with moderation, and without animosity. I am not subject to all-in-all, thorough-going engagements. Anger and hatred are beyond the duty of justice; and are passions only useful to those who do not keep themselves strictly to their duty by simple reason: *Utatur motu animi qui uti ratione non potest.*[2] "He only employs his passion that can make no use of his reason." All lawful and equitable intentions are moderate and equable of themselves; if otherwise, they degenerate into seditious and unlawful; this is it which makes me walk everywhere with my head erect, my face and heart open. To confess the truth, and I am not afraid to confess it, I should easily, in case of need, light up one candle to St. Michael, and another

1 Plutarch, *On the Difference between a Flatterer and a Friend*, c. 24.

2 Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 25.

to his dragon, like the old woman; I will follow the right cause even to the fire; but without the fire if I can. Let Montaigne be overwhelmed in the public ruin if need be; but if there be no need, I should think myself obliged to fortune that saves him; and I will make use of all the length of line my duty allows for his preservation. Was it not Atticus who, being of the just but losing side, preserved himself by his moderation in that universal shipwreck of the world, amongst so many changes and revolutions?[1] In private men, such as he, it is much easier; and, in such sort of business, I find a man may justly be ambitious not to be meddling.

That it is neither honourable nor honest to stand neuter in a civil war.

For a man, indeed, to be wavering and irresolute, to keep his affections unmoved and without inclination, in the troubles of his country, and a public division, I neither think handsome nor honest:—*Ea non media, sed nulla via est, velut eventum expectantium, quo fortunæ consilia sua applicent.*[2] "That is not a middle way, but no way, to expect events and refer their resolutions to fortune." This may be allowed in our neighbours' affairs; and Gelo, tyrant of Syracuse, suspended his inclination in this way, betwixt the Greeks and barbarians, keeping an ambassador residing with presents at Delphos, to lie and watch to see which way fortune would incline, and then take immediate opportunity to fall in with the victors.[3] It would be a kind of treason to proceed after this manner in our own domestic affairs, wherein we must of necessity be of the one side or the other; though I hold it more excusable for a man to sit still, when he has no office or command to call him out to action, except in foreign expeditions; to which, however, according to our laws, no man is pressed against his will; and yet I don't excuse myself upon these terms. Even those who wholly engage themselves in such a war may behave themselves

[1] Nepos, *in Vitâ*, c. 6.
[2] Livy, xxxii. 21. The words in the text are somewhat different.
[3] Herod. vii. 163.

with so much moderation and temper that the storm may fly over their heads without doing them any harm. Had we not reason to expect such an issue in the person of the Sieur de Morvilliers, late Bishop of Orleans?[1] And I know several who, though they behave themselves with the greatest courage and vigour in the present war, whose manners are yet so gentle, obliging, and just, that they will certainly stand firm, whatever event heaven is preparing for us. I am of opinion that it properly belongs to kings only to quarrel with kings; and laugh at those bully-rooks that, out of wantonness of courage, put themselves forward in so disproportioned disputes; for a man has never the more particular quarrel with a prince for marching openly and boldly against him, for his own honour and according to his duty; if the latter does not love such a person he does better, he has an esteem for him; and the cause of defending the laws, and the ancient government of a kingdom, has this always especially annexed to it, that even those who, for their own private interest, invade them, excuse, if they do not honour the defenders.

Vices disguised under the name of virtues.

But we ought not, as the fashion is at present, to honour with the name of duty, that peevishness and inward discontent which spring from private interest and passion; nor call treacherous and malicious conduct courage. People give the name of zeal to their propensity to mischief and violence, though it is not the cause, but their interest, that inflames them; they kindle and begin a war, not because it is just, but because it is war.

Nothing hinders a man from behaving himself discreetly, without any breach of his loyalty, amongst the adverse party; carry yourself then, if not with the same equal affection (for that is capable of different measures), at least with an affection moderate, well tempered, and such as shall not so engage you to one party that it may claim all you are able to do for

[1] Jean de Morvilliers, Bishop of Orleans and Keeper of the Seals of France, born at Blois in 1506, died at Tours in 1577. He took an active part in the treaty of Cambray and the Council of Trent. He was a warm friend of the Guise, or Anti-reform party, but was never guilty of persecution.

it, and content yourself also with a moderate proportion of their favour, and swim in troubled waters, without fishing in them.

The other way of offering a man's self, and the utmost service he is able to do, both to one party and the other, has yet in it less of prudence than conscience. Does not he to whom you betray another, by whom you were as welcomed as by himself, know that you will at another time do as much for him? He holds you for a villain; and in the mean time hears what you will say, gathers intelligence from you, and works his own ends out of your disloyalty; for double-dealing men are useful in bringing in, but we must have a care they carry out as little as possible.

I say nothing to one party which I may not upon occasion say to the other, with perhaps a little alteration of accent; and report nothing but things either indifferent or known, or what is of common consequence. I cannot suffer myself, for any consideration, to tell them a lie. What is intrusted to my secrecy I religiously conceal; but I take as few trusts of that nature upon me as I can; the secrets of princes are a troublesome burden to such as are not interested in them. I very willingly capitulate that they trust me with little, but that they confidently rely upon what I tell them. I have ever known more than I desired. One open way of speaking opens another open way of speaking, and draws out discoveries, like wine and love. Philippides, in my opinion, answered King Lysimachus very discreetly, who asking him what part of his estate he should bestow upon him,—"What you will," said he, "provided it be none of your secrets."[1] I see every one mutters, and is displeased, if the bottom of the affair be concealed from him wherein he is employed, or that there be any reservation in the case; for my part, I am content to know no more of the business than what they desire I should employ myself in, nor desire that my knowledge should exceed or constrain my word. If I must serve for

[1] Plutarch, *on Curiosity*, c. 4.

an instrument of deceit, let it be at least with a safe conscience; I would not be reputed a servant so affectionate or so loyal, as to be fit to betray any one; he who is unfaithful to himself is excusably so to his master. But there are princes who do not accept men by halves, and despise limited and conditional services. I cannot help it; I truly tell them how far I can go; for a slave I would not be, but upon very good reason; and not even then. And they also are to blame to require from a freeman the same subjection and obligation to their service, that they do from one whom they have made and bought, or whose fortune particularly and expressly depends upon theirs. The laws have delivered me from a great anxiety; they have chosen a master for me; all other superiority and obligation ought to be relative to that, and cut off from everything else. Yet is not this to say that, if my affection should otherwise sway and incline me, my hand would presently obey it; the will and desire are a law to themselves; but actions must receive commission from the public appointment.

All this proceeding of mine is a little dissonant from the ordinary forms; it would produce no great effects, nor be of any long duration; innocence itself could not, in this age of ours, either negotiate without dissimulation, or traffic without lying; and public employments are by no means to my palate; what my profession requires I perform after the most private manner that I can. Being young, I was engaged up to the ears in business, and it succeeded well; but I disengaged myself as soon as I could. I have often since avoided meddling in it, seldom accepted, and never asked it; keeping my back still turned to ambition, but, if not like rowers, who advance backward, yet so nevertheless that I am less obliged to my resolution than to my good fortune, that I was not wholly embarked in it. For there are ways, less displeasing to my taste, and more suitable to my ability, by which, if she had formerly called me to the public service, and my own advancement towards the world's opinion, I

know I should, in spite of all my own arguments to the contrary, have pursued them. Such as commonly say, in opposition to what I profess, that what I call freedom, simplicity, and plainness, in my manners, is art and subtlety, and rather prudence than goodness, industry than nature, good sense than good luck, do me more honour than disgrace; but assuredly they make my subtlety too subtle; and whoever has followed me close, and pryed narrowly into me, I will give him the victory if he does not confess that there is no rule in their school that could answer to this natural motion, and maintain an appearance of liberty and license so equal and inflexible, through so many various and crooked paths, and through which all their wit and endeavours could never have led them. The way of truth is one, and simple; that of particular profit, and the commodity of affairs with which a man is intrusted, is double, unequal, and casual. I have seen these counterfeit and artificial liberties practised, but for the most part without success. They relish of Æsop's ass, who, in emulation of the dog, sportively clapped his two forefeet upon his master's shoulders; but as many caresses as the dog had for such an expression of kindness, twice so many blows with a cudgel had the poor ass for his compliment: *Id maximè quemque decet quod est cujusque suùm maximè.*[1] "That best becomes every man that he is best at." I will not deprive deceit of its due; that would be to understand the world but very ill; I know it has often been of great use, and that it maintains and supplies the greatest part of men's affairs. There are vices that are lawful, as there are many actions either good, or at least excusable, that are not lawful in themselves.

Universal justice much more perfect than particular and national justice.

That justice which in itself is natural and universal, is otherwise and more nobly ordered than that other justice, which is peculiar, national, and wrested to the ends of governments: *Veri juris germanæque justitiæ solidam et expressam effi-*

[1] Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 31.

giem nullam tenemus, umbra et imaginibus utimur;[1] "We retain no solid and express effigies of true right and justice we have only the shadow and notion of it;" insomuch that the sage Dandamis,[2] hearing the lives of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Diogenes cited, judged them to be great men every way, excepting that they were too much subjected to the reverence of the laws; which, to second and authorize, true virtue must abate very much of its original vigour; and many vicious actions are introduced, not only by their permission, but advice: *Ex senatus-consultis plebisque scitis scelera exercentur.*[3] "Vicious actions are committed by the consent of the magistrates and the common laws." I follow the common phrase that distinguishes betwixt profitable and honest things; so as to call some natural actions that are not only profitable and necessary, dishonest and foul.

But let us proceed in our examples of treachery. Two pretenders to the kingdom of Thrace[4] were fallen into dispute about their title; the emperor[5] hindered them from proceeding to blows; but one of them, under colour of bringing things to a friendly issue by an interview, having invited his competitor to an entertainment in his own house, took and killed him. Justice required that the Romans should have satisfaction for this offence; but there was a difficulty in obtaining it by ordinary ways. What, therefore, they could not do by due forms of law without a war, and without danger, they resolved to do by treachery; what they could not honestly do, they did profitably; for which end one Pomponius Flaccus was found to be a fit instrument. This man, by dissembled words and assurances, having drawn the other into his snare, instead of the honour and favour he had promised him, sent him bound hand and foot to Rome. Here one traitor betrayed another, contrary to common custom; for

[1] Cicero, *de Offic.* iii. 17.

[2] He was an Indian sage who lived in the time of Alexander. What Montaigne here says of him is reported by Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*, c. 20. In Strabo, xv. this Indian philosopher is called Mandanis.

[3] Seneca, *Ep.* 95.

[4] *Rhescuporis* and *Cotys;* the first, brother of Remetalces, the last king of Thrace; the second, his son.

[5] *Tiberius.* Tacitus, *Annal.* ii. 65.

they are full of mistrust, and 'tis hard to overreach them in their own art; witness the sad experience we have lately had.[1]

Let who will be Pomponius Flaccus, and there are enough that would be; for my part, both my word and my faith are, like all the rest, parts of this common body; their best effect is the public service; this I take for presupposed. But as, should one command me to take charge of the palace and the records there, I should make answer that I understood it not; or the command of a conductor of pioneers, I would say that I was called to a more honourable employment; so, likewise, he that would employ me to lie, betray, and forswear myself, though not to assassinate, or to poison, for some notable service, I should say, "If I have robbed or stolen any thing from any man, send me rather to the galleys." For it is lawful for a man of honour to say, as the Lacedemonians did, having been defeated by Antipater when just upon the point of concluding an agreement: "You may impose as heavy and ruinous taxes upon us as you please; but to command us to do shameful and dishonest things, you will lose your time, for it is to no purpose."[2] Every one ought to take the same oath to himself that the kings of Egypt made their judges solemnly swear, "That they would not do any thing contrary to their consciences, though ever so much commanded to it by the kings themselves."[3] In such commissions there is an evident mark of ignominy and condemnation, and he who gives it does at the same time accuse you; and gives it, if you understand it right, for a burden and a punishment. As much as the public affairs are bettered by your exploit, so much are your own the worse; and the better you behave yourself in it, 'tis so much the worse for yourself; and it will be no new thing, nor perhaps without some colour of justice, if the same person ruin you who set you at work.

[1] Montaigne alludes to the feigned reconciliation, in 1588, between Catherine de Medicis and Henry, Duke of Guise, who were deceiving each the other.

[2] Plutarch, *How to distinguish a Flatterer*, c. 21.

[3] Id. *Apothegms of the Kings.*

If treachery can be in any case excusable, it must be only so when it is practised to chastise and betray treachery. There are examples enough of treacheries, not only rejected, but chastised and punished by those in favour of whom they were undertaken. Who is ignorant of Fabricius's sentence against Pyrrhus's physician?

Wherein treachery is alone to be excused.

But this we also find recorded, that some persons have commanded a thing, who afterwards have severely revenged the execution of it upon him they had employed, rejecting the reputation of so unbridled an authority, and disowning so abandoned and so base an obedience. Jaropelus, duke of Russia, tampered with a gentleman of Hungary to betray Boleslaus, king of Poland, either by killing him, or by giving the Russians opportunity to do him some notable mischief. This gallant goes presently in hand with it; was more assiduous in the service of that king than before; so that he obtained the honour to be of his council, and one of the chiefest in his trust. With these advantages, and taking an opportunity of his master's absence, he betrayed Visilicia,[1] a great and rich city, to the Russians, which was entirely sacked and burnt, and not only all the inhabitants of both sexes, young and old, put to the sword, but moreover a great number of neighbouring gentry that he had drawn thither to that wicked end. Jaropelus's revenge being thus satisfied, and his anger appeased, which was not however without pretence (for Boleslaus had highly offended him, and after the same manner), and sated with the effect of this treachery, coming to consider the foul and naked ugliness of it, and to regard it with a sound judgment and clear from passion, looked upon what had been done with so much horror and remorse, that he caused the eyes to be bored out, and the tongue and privy parts to be cut off, of him that had performed it.[2]

Instances of treachery punished by those who instigated it.

[1] *Vislicza*, a town in the palatinate of Sandomir.

[2] Martin Cromer, *De Rebus Polon.* v p. 131–2.

Antigonus persuaded the Argyraspidian soldiers to betray Eumenes, their general, his adversary, into his hands; but after he had caused him so delivered to be slain, he would himself be the commissioner of the divine justice for the punishment of so detestable a crime, and committed them into the hands of the governor of the province, with express command by all means to destroy, and bring them all to an evil end, so that, of all that great number of men, not so much as one ever returned again into Macedonia.[1] The more effectually he had been served by them, the greater wickedness he looked upon it to be, and the more deserving a severe punishment.

The slave that betrayed the place where his master, P. Sulpicius lay concealed, was, according to the promise of Sylla's proscription, manumitted for his pains; but, according to the promise of the public justice, he was, when a freed man, thrown headlong from the Tarpeian rock.

And our King Clovis,[2] instead of the armour of gold he had promised them, caused three of Canacre's [3] servants to be hanged after they had betrayed their master to him, though he had debauched them to it.

They hanged them with the purse of their reward about their necks; having satisfied their second and special faith, they satisfy the general and first.

Mahomet the Second, being resolved to rid himself of his brother, out of state jealousy, according to the practice of the Ottoman family, employed one of his officers in the execution, who, pouring a quantity of water too fast into him, choked him. This being done, to expiate the murder, he delivered the murderer into the hands of the mother of him he had so caused to be put to death (for they were only brothers by the father's side), who, in his presence, ripped up the murderer's bosom, and with her own hands rifled his breast for his heart, tore it out, and threw it to the dogs. And, even

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Eumenes*, c. 9.
[2] Val. Max. vi. 5, 7.
[3] Or rather *Cararic*. Gregory of Tours, ii. 41

to the vilest dispositions, it is the sweetest thing imaginable, having once got their ends in a vicious action, immediately to tag to it, with all imaginable security, some show of virtue and justice, by way of compensation and conscientious remorse. To this may be added, that they look upon the ministers of such horrid crimes as people that reproach them with them; and think by their deaths to raze out the memory and testimony of such proceedings.

Or if perhaps you are rewarded, not to frustrate the public necessity of that extreme and desperate remedy, he that does it cannot, for all that, if he be not such himself, but look upon you as a cursed and execrable man; and conclude you a greater traitor than he does him against whom you are so; for he tries the vice of your disposition by your own hands, where he cannot possibly be deceived, you having no object of preceding hatred to move you to such an act; but he employs you as condemned malefactors are employed in executions of justice, an office as necessary as discreditable. Besides the baseness of such commissions, there is moreover a prostitution of conscience. As the daughter of Sejanus could not be put to death by the law of Rome,[1] because she was a virgin, she was, to make it lawful, first ravished by the hangman, and then strangled; not only his hand, but his soul is slave to the public convenience.

Virgins could not be put to death at Rome.

When Amurath the First, the more grievously to punish his subjects who had taken part with the parricidical rebellion of his son against him, ordained that the nearest kindred should assist in the execution, I find it very noble in some of them to have rather chosen to be unjustly thought guilty of the parricide of another, than to serve justice by a parricide of their own; where I have seen, at the taking of some little fort by assault in my time, some rascals who, to save their own lives, would consent to hang their friends and companions, I have looked upon them to be in a worse condition than

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* v. 9.

those that were hanged. 'Tis said that Witold, prince of Lithuania, introduced a law into his country, that when a criminal was condemned to death, he should execute the sentence on himself; for he thought it strange that a third person, innocent of the fault, should be made guilty of a homicide.[1]

Criminals condemned to execute themselves.

A prince that, by some urgent circumstance, or some impetuous and unforeseen accident that very much concerns his state, is compelled to forfeit his word, or break his faith, or otherwise forced from his ordinary duty, ought to attribute this necessity to a lash of the divine rod; vice it is not, for he has given up his own reason to a more universal and more powerful reason; but, certainly, 'tis a misfortune; so that if any one should ask me what remedy? "None," say I, "if he were really racked betwixt these two extremes; *sed videat, ne quæratur latebra perjurio;*[2] 'Though let him guard against seeking a pretext for perjury;' he must do it; but if he did it without regret, if it did not grieve him to do it, 'tis a sign his conscience is in a scurvy condition." If there be a person to be found of so tender a conscience as to think no cure whatever worth so important a remedy, I shall like him never the worse; he could not more excusably, or more decently, perish. We cannot do all we would; so that we must often, as the last anchorage, commit the protection of our vessel to the conduct of heaven. To what more just necessity does he reserve himself? What is less possible for him to do, than what he cannot do but at the expense of his faith and honour? things that perhaps ought to be dearer to him than his own safety, or even the safety of his people. Though he should, with folded arms, only call God to his assistance, may he not hope that the divine bounty will not refuse the favour of an extraordinary arm to just and pure hands? These are dangerous examples, rare and sickly exceptions to our natural rules; we must yield to them, but with great moderation and circumspection; no private advantage is of such importance

[1] Cromer *de Reb. Pol.* xvi. p. 384. [2] Cicero, *de Offic.* iii. 29.

that we should, upon that account, strain our consciences to such a degree; the public may, when very manifest, and of very great concern.

Timoleon made an expiation for his strange exploit, by the tears he shed, calling to mind that it was with a fraternal hand that he had slain the tyrant; and it justly pricked his conscience that he had been necessitated to purchase the public utility at so great a price as the violation of his own goodness. Even the Senate itself, by his means delivered from slavery, durst not positively determine of so high a fact, and divided into two so important and contrary aspects; but the Syracusans having opportunely, at the same time,[1] sent to the Corinthians to solicit their protection, and to require of them a captain fit to reëstablish their city in its former dignity, and to cleanse Sicily of several little tyrants by whom it was oppressed, they deputed Timoleon for that service, with this evasive declaration: "That, according as he should behave himself, well or ill, in his employment, their sentence should incline either to favour the deliverer of his country, or to disfavour the murderer of his brother." This fantastic conclusion carries along with it some excuse, by reason of the danger of the example, and the importance of so strange an action; and they did well to discharge their own judgment of it, and refer it to other considerations and contingencies. But Timoleon's conduct and behaviour in this expedition soon made his cause more clear; so worthily and virtuously did he carry himself upon all occasions. And the good fortune that accompanied him in the difficulties he had to overcome in this noble employment seemed to be strewed in his way by the gods, as favourably conspiring for his justification.

This man's aim was excusable, if any can be so; but the profit of the augmentation of the public revenue, that served the Roman Senate for a pretence to the foul conclusion I am

[1] Diod. Sicul. xvi. Plutarch, on the other hand, says (*Life of Timoleon*) it was twenty years afterwards. Nepos does not clear up the point at all.

going to relate, is not sufficient to warrant any such injustice.

Certain cities had for money redeemed themselves and their liberties out of the hands of L. Sylla, and that, too, by order and consent of the Senate; but the affair coming again in question, the Senate condemned them to be taxable as they were before, and that the money they had disbursed for their redemption should be confiscated.[1] Civil wars often produce such vile examples, that we punish private men for confiding in us when we were public ministers; and the selfsame magistrate makes another man pay the penalty of his change, that cannot help it; the pedagogue whips his scholar for his docility; and the guide beats the blind man that he leads; a horrid image of justice.

There are rules in philosophy that are both false and weak.

Private utility not to be preferred before faith given.

The example that is proposed to us, preferring private utility before faith given, receives not weight enough by the circumstance they put to it. Robbers have seized you, and after having made you swear to pay them a certain sum of money, dismiss you. 'Tis not well to say that an honest man may be quit from his oath without payment, being out of their hands. 'Tis no such thing; what fear has once made me willing to do, I am bound to do when I am no more in fear; and though that fear only prevailed with my tongue, without forcing my will, yet am I bound to keep my word. For my part, when my tongue has inconsiderately said something that I did not think, I have made a conscience of not disowning it. Otherwise, by degrees we shall abolish all the right another pretends to from our promise and word: *Quasi vero forti viro vis possit adhiberi.*[2] "As though a man truly valiant could be compelled." 'Tis only lawful, upon the account of private interest, to excuse breach of promise, when we have promised something that is unlawful and wicked in itself; for the right of virtue ought to supersede the right of any obligation of ours.

[1] Cicero, *de Offic.* iii. 22.

[2] Id. *ib.* iii. 30.

I have formerly placed Epaminondas in the first rank of excellent men, and do not recall it. How far did he stretch the consideration of his own particular duty? who never killed a man that he had overcome; who, though for the inestimable benefit of restoring the liberty of his country, made conscience of killing a tyrant, or his accomplices, without due form of justice;[1] and who concluded him to be a wicked man, how good a citizen soever otherwise, who amongst his enemies spared not his friend and former guest or host in battle? This was a soul of a rich composition; he conjoined goodness and humanity, nay, even the tenderest and most refined in the whole school of philosophy, to the rudest and most violent of all human actions. That great courage, so high, so constant, so obstinate against poverty, pain, and death, was it nature or art that had softened it to so extreme a degree of sweetness and compassion? Terrible in arms, covered with the blood of foes, behold him, on the hotly-contested plain, overwhelming and destroying a nation invincible to all others but to him alone, yet, in the fury of an engagement, turning aside from encountering his host and friend. Truly, he was most fit to command in war who could restrain it, with the curb of a benign nature, in the height and heat of his fury, a fury inflamed and foaming with blood and slaughter. 'Tis almost a miracle to be able to mix any image of justice with such actions; and it was only possible for such a steadfastness of mind as that of Epaminondas to mix with it the sweetness and easiness of the gentlest manner and purest innocence; and whereas one[2] told the Mamertines "that statutes were of no resistance against armed men;" and another[3] told the tribune of the people "that the time of justice and that of war were distinct things;" and a third[4] said "that the noise of arms deafened the voice of the law;" this man in all this rattle was not deaf to that even of civility and courtesy. Did he not borrow from his enemies[5] the

[1] Plutarch, *On the Dæmon of Socrates*, c. 4 and 24.
[2] *Pompey*. Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 3.
[3] *Cæsar*. Id. *in Vitâ*, c. 11.
[4] *Marius*. Id. *in Vitâ*, c. 10.
[5] *The Lacedemonians*.

custom of sacrificing to the muses when he went to war, that they might, by their sweetness and gayety, soften martial and unrelenting fury! Let us not fear, by the example of so great a master, to believe that there is something unlawful, even against an enemy; and that the common concern ought not to require all things of all, against private interest: *Manente memoria, etiam in dissidio publicorum fœderum, privati juris;*[1] "The memory of private rights is not extinguished even amongst public dissensions."

> Et nulla potentia vires
> Præstandi, ne quid peccet amicus, habet;[2]

"No power can sanction treachery to a friend;"

and that all things are not lawful to an honest man, for the service of his prince, the laws, or the general quarrel: *Non enim patria præstat omnibus officiis . . . et ipsi conducit pios habere cives in parentes.*[3] "Our country does not absorb all our duties; it is conducive to its own interest to have its citizens duteous and affectionate towards their relations." 'Tis an instruction proper for the time wherein we live; we need not harden our courages with these arms of steel; 'tis enough that our shoulders are inured to them. 'Tis enough to dip our pens in ink, without dipping them in blood; if it be grandeur of courage, and the effect of a singular and uncommon virtue, to contemn friendship, private obligations, a man's word, and relationship, for the common good and obedience to the magistrate, 'tis certainly sufficient to excuse us, that 'tis a grandeur that had no place in the grandeur of Epaminondas's courage.

I abominate those mad exhortations of this other disturbed soul:[4] —

> . . . Dum tela micant, non vos pietatis imago
> Ulla, nec adversa conspecti fronte parentes
> Commoveant; vultus gladio turbate verendos.

[1] Livy, xxv. 18.
[2] Ovid, *De Ponto*, i. 7, 37.
[3] Cicero, *de Offic.* iii. 23.
[4] Julius Cæsar, who, when in an open war against his country, with a design to subvert its liberty, cries out, "*Dum tela micant*," &c. Lucan, vii. 320.

"When swords are drawn, let no remains of love,
Friendship, or kindred, your compassion move;
But boldly wound the venerable face
Of your own father if oppos'd in place."

Let us deprive wicked, bloody, and treacherous natures of such a pretence of reason. Let us set aside this insane and enormous justice, and stick to more humane imitations. How much can time and example do! In an encounter, in the civil war against Cinna, one of Pompey's soldiers having unawares killed his brother, who was of the opposite party, immediately, through shame and sorrow, killed himself;[1] and some years after, in another civil war among the same people, one demanded a reward from his captain for having killed his brother.[2]

The utility of an action does not render it honourable.

A man brings but a very bad proof of the honour and beauty of an action, by pleading the usefulness of it; and such as say that every one is obliged to do it, and that it is honest to do it, if it is useful, draw but a very false conclusion:—

Omnia non pariter rerum sunt omnibus apta.[3]

"All things are not alike for all men fit."

Take the most necessary and profitable thing for human society; it is marriage; and yet the counsel of the saints find the contrary much better, excluding therefrom the most venerable profession of men; as we design those horses for stallions of which we make the least account.

[1] Tacitus, *Hist.* iii. 51.
[2] Id. *ib.*
[3] Propert. iii. 9, 7.

CHAPTER II.

OF REPENTANCE.

OTHERS form man; I only report him; and represent a particular one ill made enough; and whom, if I had him to model anew, I should certainly make something very different from what he is; but that's past recalling. Now, though the features of my picture alter and change, 'tis still like. The world eternally turns round, all things therein are incessantly moving; the earth, the rocks of Caucasus, and the pyramids of Egypt, both by the public motion and their own; even constancy itself is no other but a slower and a more languishing motion. I cannot fix my object, 'tis always tottering and reeling by a natural drunkenness; I take it as it is at the instant I consider it; I do not paint its being, I paint its passage; not a passage from one age to another, or, as the people say, from seven to seven years, but from day to day, from minute to minute; I must accommodate my history to the hour; I may presently change, not only by fortune, but also by intention. 'Tis an observation of various and changeable accidents, and irresolute imaginations, and, as it falls out, sometimes contrary. Whether it be that I am then another myself, or that I take subjects by other circumstances and considerations, so it is that I may perhaps contradict truth; but, as Demades[1] said, never myself. Could my soul once take footing, I would not essay, but resolve; but it is always learning and making trial.

The world subject to continual changes.

I propose a life mean, and without lustre, but 'tis all one;

[1] Demades, however (Plutarch, *Life of Demosthenes*), says this, not of truth, but of the interest of the commonwealth.

all moral philosophy is applied as well to a private life as to one of the greatest employment. Every man carries the entire form of human condition. Authors have hitherto communicated themselves to the people by some particular and foreign mark; I, the first of any, by my universal being; as Michael de Montaigne, not as a grammarian, a poet, or a lawyer. If the world find fault that I speak too much of myself, I find fault that they do not so much as think of themselves. But why, being so private in my way of life, should I seek to make myself publicly known? And why should I introduce into the world, where art and mode have so much credit and authority, crude and simple effects of nature, and of a weak nature to boot? Is it not to build a wall without stone or brick, or some such thing, to write books without learning? The fancies of music are carried on by art, mine by chance. I have this, at least, according to rule, that never any man treated of a subject he better understood and knew, than I what I have undertaken, in which I am the most understanding man alive. Secondly, that never any man penetrated farther into his matter, nor better and more distinctly sifted the parts and consequences of it, nor ever more exactly and fully arrived at the end he proposed to himself. To finish it, I need bring nothing but fidelity to the work; and that is there the most pure and sincere that is anywhere to be found. I speak truth, not so much as I would, but as much as I dare, and I dare a little the more as I grow older; for it would seem that custom allows to age more liberty of prating, and more indiscretion of talking of a man's self. That cannot fall out here which I often see elsewhere, that the work and the artificer contradict one another; has a man of so sober conversation written so foolish a treatise? or do so learned writings proceed from a man of so weak conversation? He who talks in an ordinary and writes in an otherwise than ordinary way, 'tis to say that his capacity is borrowed, and not his own. A

Why and in what manner Montaigne undertakes to speak of himself in this work.

learned man is not learned in all things; but a sufficient man is sufficient throughout, even to ignorance itself; here my book and I go hand and hand together. Elsewhere men may recommend or condemn a work without involving the workman; here they cannot; who touches the one, attacks the other. He that shall judge it without knowing *him*, will more wrong himself than me; who does know him, will give me all the satisfaction I desire. I shall be happy beyond my desert, if I can obtain only thus much from the public approbation, as to make men of understanding perceive that I was capable of making my advantage of knowledge, had I had it, and that I deserved to be assisted by a better memory.

Be pleased here to excuse what I often repeat, that I very seldom repent, and that my conscience is satisfied with itself, not like the conscience of an angel, or that of a horse, but like the conscience of a man; always adding this clause, not one of ceremony, but a true and real submissive one: "That I speak, inquiring and ignorant, purely and simply referring myself to the common and accepted beliefs for the resolution." I do not teach, I only repeat.

The sorrow which attends vice.

There is no vice that is really such which does not offend, and which a sound judgment does not accuse; for there is in it so manifest a deformity and inconvenience that perhaps they are in the right who say that it is chiefly begot by stupidity and ignorance; so hard it is to imagine that a man can know without abhorring it. Malice sucks up the greatest part of her own venom, and poisons herself.[1] Vice leaves, like an ulcer in the flesh, repentance in the soul, which is always scratching and lacerating itself; for reason effaces all other griefs and sorrows, but it begets that of repentance, which is so much the more grievous by reason it springs within, as the cold and heat of fevers are more sharp than those that only strike upon the outward skin. I hold for vices (but every one

[1] Seneca, *Ep.* 81.

according to its proportion) not only those which reason and nature condemn, but those also which the opinion of men, though false and erroneous, has made such, if authorized by law and custom.

The satisfaction that is connected with a good conscience.

There is likewise no virtue which does not rejoice a well-descended nature; there is a kind of I know not what congratulation in well-doing that gives us an inward satisfaction, and a certain generous exaltation that accompanies a good conscience; a soul daringly vicious may perhaps arm itself with security; but it cannot supply itself with this complacency and satisfaction. It is no small satisfaction to a man to see himself preserved from the contagion of so depraved an age, and to say to himself, "Whoever could penetrate into my soul would not there find me guilty either of the affliction or the ruin of any one; or of revenge, or envy, or any offence against the public laws, or of innovation, or trouble, or failure of my word; and though the libertinage of the time permits and teaches it to every one, yet have I not plundered any Frenchman's goods, or taken his money, and have lived in war as well as in peace, upon what is my own; neither have I set any man to work without paying him his hire." These testimonies of a good conscience please, and this natural rejoicing is very beneficial to us, and the only reward that we can never fail of.

Every man ought to sit in judgment upon himself.

To ground the recompense of virtuous actions upon the approbation of others is too uncertain and unsafe a foundation, especially in so corrupt and ignorant an age as this; the good opinion of the vulgar is injurious; upon whom do you rely to show you what is commendable? God defend me from being an honest man, according to the description I daily see every one make in honour of himself: *Quæ fuerant vitia mores sunt.*[1] "What before were vices are now become manners." Some of my friends have sometimes schooled and tutored me

[1] Seneca, *Ep.* 39.

with great sincerity and plainness, either of their own accord, or by my entreaty, as an office which in a well-disposed soul, surpasses all other a ts of friendship not only in utility, but kindness; I have always received them with the most open arms of courtesy and acknowledgment; but, to say the truth, I have often found so much false measure, both in their reproaches and praises, that I had not done much amiss rather to have erred than to have done well, according to their method. We chiefly, who live private lives, not exposed to any other view than our own, ought to have settled a pattern within ourselves, by which to try our actions; and according to that, sometimes to encourage, and sometimes to correct ourselves. I have my own laws and judicature to judge of myself, and apply myself more to these than any other rules. I do indeed restrain my actions according to others, but judge them not by any other rule than my own. You yourself only know if you are cowardly and cruel, or loyal and devout; others see you not, and only guess at you by uncertain conjectures; they do not so much see your nature as your art; rely not therefore upon their opinions, but stick to your own: *Tuo tibi judicio est utendum . . . virtutis et vitiorum grave ipsius conscientiæ pondus est; qua sublata, jacent omnia.*[1] "Thou must spend thy own judgment upon thyself; great is the weight of thy own conscience in the discovery of thy own virtues and vices; that being taken away, all things are lost."

But the saying that repentance immediately follows sin seems not to have respect to sin in its high estate, which is lodged in us as in its own proper habitation;[2] we may disown and retract the vices that surprise us, and to which we are hurried by passions; but those which, by a long habit, are rooted in a strong and vigorous will, are not subject to contradiction. Repentance is no other than a recanting of the will, and an opposition to our fancies, which lead us which way they please. It makes this person disown his former virtue and continence:—

What repentance is.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 25. [2] Id. *de Nat. Deor.* iii. 35.

Quæ mens est hodie, cur eadem non puero fuit?
Vel cur his animis incolumes non redeunt genæ?[1]

"Why, when a boy, was not my mind,
As now it is, to love inclin'd?
Or why does not youth's rosy hue
Return, my beauty to renew?"

'Tis an exact and exquisite life that contains itself in due order in private. Every one may take a part in the farce, and assume the character of an honest man, upon the stage; but within, and in his own bosom, where all things are lawful to us, all things concealed,—to be regular, that is the point. The next degree is to be so in one's house, in one's ordinary actions, for which one is accountable to none, and where there is no study or artifice; and therefore Bias, in setting forth the excellent state of a private family, says, "Of which the master is the same within, by his own virtue and temper, that he is abroad, for fear of the laws and report of men;"[2] and it was a worthy saying of Julius Drusus,[3] to the masons who offered him, for three thousand crowns, to put his house in such a posture that his neighbours should no longer have the opportunity of seeing into it as before; "I will give you," said he, "six thousand to make it so that everybody may see into every room."[4] 'Tis honourably recorded of Agesilaus,[5] that he used in his journeys always to take up his lodgings in the temples, to the end that the people, and the gods themselves, might pry into his most private actions. Such a one has been a miracle to the world, in whom neither his wife nor his ser-

The excellence of a private life which is regular.

1 Horace here represents Ligurinus, who he says, will repent when he comes to be an old man, that he had not made an ill use of his beauty while he had it. Hor. ode iv. 10, 7.

2 Plutarch, *Banquet of the Wise Men.*

3 Or rather Marcus Livius Drusus, the famous tribune of the people, who died anno 662 at Rome, after having, by his ambition, fomented a dangerous war in Italy, of which Florus treats, lib. iii. 17. As to what Montaigne says here of Livius Drusus, he took it from Plutarch, *Instructions to those who manage State Affairs*, where this Drusus is called Julius Drusus a tribune of the people. If Montaigne had consulted Paterculus on this article, he might have perceived this small mistake of Plutarch.

4 It is Plutarch that makes him speak thus; but, according to Paterculus, Drusus being about to build a house, and having an offer made him by the architect to contrive it after such a model that none of his neighbours might look into it, Drusus said, "If you know how, make me such a house rather, that what I do in it may be seen by everybody."

5 Plutarch, *Life of Agesilaus*, c. 5.

vant have ever seen any thing so much as remarkable; few men have been admired by their own domestics.[1] No one has been a prophet, not merely in his own house, but in his own country, says the experience of histories. 'Tis the same in things of no consequence; and in this insignificant example the image of a greater is to be seen. In my country of Gascony they look upon it as very droll to see me in print. The farther off I am read from my own home, the better I am esteemed; I am fain to purchase printers in Guienne, elsewhere they purchase me. Upon this it is that they lay their foundation who conceal themselves while present and living, to obtain a name when they are absent and dead.

No man a prophet in his own country.

I had rather have a great deal less in hand, and do not go into the world upon any other account than my present share; when I leave it, I'll cry quit. The people reconduct Mr. Such-a-one, with public wonder and applause, to his very door; he puts off his pageantry with his robe, and falls so much the lower by how much he was higher exalted. In himself within all is tumult and disorder. And though all should be regular there, it requires a quick and well chosen judgment to perceive it in these low and private actions. To which may be added that order is a heavy melancholic virtue. To enter a breach, conduct an embassy, and govern a people, are actions of eclat; to reprehend, laugh, sell, pay, hate, and genteelly and justly converse with a man's own family and with himself; not to relent, not to give a man's self the lie, is more rare and hard, and less remarkable. By which means retired lives, whatever is said to the contrary, undergo offices of as great or greater difficulty than others do; and private men, says Aristotle,[2] serve virtue more painfully and assiduously than those in authority; we prepare ourselves for eminent occasions, more out of glory than conscience. The shortest way to arrive at glory should be to do that for con-

[1] "No man is a hero to his valet-de-chambre," said Marshal Catinat.

[2] *Ethics*, x. 7.

science which we do for glory; and the virtue of Alexander appears to me with much less vigour, in his great theatre, than that of Socrates in his mean and obscure employment. I can easily conceive Socrates in the place of Alexander; but Alexander in that of Socrates I cannot. Who shall ask the one, what he can do, he will answer, "Subdue the world;" who shall put the same question to the other, he will say, "Carry on human life conformably to his natural condition;" a much more general, weighty, and legitimate knowledge than the other.

The virtue of the soul does not consist in flying high, but walking orderly; its grandeur does not exercise itself in grandeur, but in mediocrity. As they who judge and try us within make no great account of the lustre of public actions, and see they are only streaks and rays of clear water springing from a slimy and muddy bottom; so likewise they who judge of us by this gallant outward appearance, in like manner conclude of our internal constitution; and cannot couple common faculties, such as their own, with the other faculties that astonish them, and are so far out of their sight. Therefore it is that we give such savage forms to demons; and who does not give Tamerlane great eyebrows, wide nostrils, a dreadful face, and a prodigious stature, according to the imagination he has conceived in us by the report of his name? Had any one formerly brought me to Erasmus, I should hardly have believed but that all was adage and apophthegm he spoke to his man or his hostess. We much more aptly imagine an artisan upon his close-stool, or upon his wife, than a great president, venerable by his port and sufficiency; we fancy that they will not abase themselves so much from their high tribunals as to live. As vicious souls are often incited by some strange impulse to do well, so are virtuous souls to do ill; they are therefore to be judged by their settled state, when they are at home, if ever they be so, or at least when they are most near repose, and in their native station.

Natural inclinations are much assisted and fortified by edu-

Natural inclinations fortified by education, but not changed and extirpated.

cation, but they seldom alter and overcome their institution; a thousand natures in my time have escaped towards virtue or vice, through a quite contrary discipline:—

Sic ubi desuetæ silvis in carcere clausæ
Mansuevere feræ, et vultus posuere minaces,
Atque hominem didicere pati, si torrida parvus
Venit in ora cruor, redeunt rabiesque furorque,
Admonitæque tument gustato sanguine fauces;
Fervet, et a trepido vix abstinet ira magistro;[1]

"So beasts of prey, imprison'd in a cage,
Grow tame, abandoning their native rage
And threat'ning looks, and do themselves inure
The government of mankind to endure.
But if again a little blood they taste,
Their savage fury seizes them in haste;
They thirst for more, grow fierce, and wildly stare,
As if their trembling keepers they would tear;"

these original qualities are not to be rooted out, though they may be covered and concealed. The Latin tongue is, as it were, natural to me; I understand it better than French, but I have not used to speak it, nor hardly to write it, these forty years; and yet, upon an extreme and sudden emotion, which I have fallen into twice or thrice in my life, and once on seeing my father in perfect health, fall upon me in a swoon, I have always uttered my first outcries and ejaculations in Latin; nature starting up and forcibly expressing itself, in spite of so long a discontinuation; and this example is said of many others.

The reformations of mankind only relate to externals.

They who in my time have attempted to correct the manners of the world by new opinions, have indeed reformed seeming vices, but the real and essential vices they leave as they were, if they do not augment them; and augmentation is therein to be feared; we defer all other well-doing of less cost and greater merit, upon the account of these external and arbitrary reforms, and thereby expiate at an easy rate for the other natural,

[1] Lucan, iv. 237.

consubstantial, and intestine vices. Look a little into our experience; there is no man, if he listens to himself, who does not in himself discover a particular and governing form of his own, that jostles his education, and wrestles with the tempest of passions that are contrary to him. For my part, I seldom find myself agitated with surprises; I almost always find myself in my place, as heavy and unwieldy bodies do; if I am not at home, I am always near at hand. My debauches do not transport me far, there is nothing strange or extreme in the case; and yet I have sound and vigorous raptures and delights.

The true condemnation, and which touches the common practice of men, is, that their very retreat from vice is full of filth and corruption; the idea of their reformation blotted; their repentance sick and faulty, very near as much as their sin. Some, either from having been linked to vice by a natural propensity, or long practice, cannot see the deformity of it; others (of which constitution I am) do indeed weigh vice, but they counterbalance it with the pleasure or some other reason, and suffer and lend themselves to it for a certain price, but viciously and basely still. Yet there might perhaps be imagined so vast a disproportion of measure, where, with justice, the pleasure might excuse the sin, as we say of profit; not only if accidental, and out of sin, as in thefts; but in the very exercise of it; as in the enjoyment of women, wherein the temptation is violent, and, 'tis said, not to be overcome. Being the other day at an estate in Armagnac, belonging to a kinsman of mine, I there saw a country fellow, that was by every one nicknamed "The Thief," who thus related the story of his own life; that being born a beggar, and finding that he should not be able to get his living by the labour of his hands, he resolved to turn thief; and by his strength of body had exercised this trade all the time of his youth in great security; for he got in his harvest or vintage upon other men's grounds, but a great way off, and in so great quantities, that it was

The repentance of men commonly very corrupt.

not to be imagined one man could have carried away so much in one night upon his shoulders; and, moreover, was so careful equally to divide and distribute the mischief he did, that the loss was of less importance to each individual. He is now grown old and rich, for a man of his condition, thanks be to his trade, which he openly confesses to every one. And to make his peace with God, he says he is daily, by good offices, making satisfaction to the successors of those he robbed; and if he do not finish (for to do it all at once he is not able), he will then leave it in charge to his heirs to perform the rest, proportionably to the wrong he himself only knows he has done to every one. By this description, whether true or false, this man looks upon theft as a dishonest action, and hates it, but less than poverty; he repents simply, but for as much as is thus recompensed, he repents not. This is not that habit that incorporates us into vice, and conforms even our understanding itself to it; nor is it that impetuous whirlwind that, by sudden gusts, troubles and blinds our souls, and for the time precipitates us, judgment and all, into the power of vice.

Montaigne's judgment was the common guide of his actions.

What I do I do thoroughly, by custom, and proceed all of a piece; I have seldom any movement that steals away, or, hides itself from my reason, and that is not conducted by the consent of all my faculties, without division or intestine sedition; my judgment, therefore, has either all the blame or all the praise of it; and the blame it once has it ever keeps; for almost from its birth it has always had the same inclination, the same course, and the same force; and as to universal opinions, I fixed myself, from my childhood, in the place where I resolved to stick. There are some sins that are impetuous, prompt, and sudden; let us set them aside; but in these other sins so often repeated, deliberated, and contrived, whether sins of complexion or sins of profession and vocation, I cannot conceive that they can have so long been settled in the same resolution, unless the reason and conscience of him who has them be constant to have them so, and the repent-

ance he boasts to be inspired with on a sudden is very hard for me to imagine. I follow not the opinion of the Pythagorean sect, "that men take up a new soul when they repair to the images of the gods, to receive oracles," unless they mean that it is new, and lent for the time, our own showing so small signs of purification and cleanness, fit for such an office.

They act quite contrary to the precepts of the stoics who strictly command us to correct the imperfections which we know ourselves guilty of, but forbid us to alter the repose of our souls: these make us believe that they have great grief and remorse within, but of amendment, correction, or interruption, they make nothing appear. It cannot certainly be a perfect cure, if the evil humours are not wholly discharged; if repentance were heavier in the scale, it would weigh down sin. I find no quality so easy for a man to counterfeit as devotion, though his life and manners are not conformable to it; the essence of it is abstruse and occult, but the appearances easy and showy.

Devotion easy to counterfeit.

For my own part, I may desire in general to be other than I am; I may condemn and dislike my whole frame, and beg of God for an entire reformation, and that he will please to pardon my natural infirmity; but methinks I ought not to call this repentance, any more than my not being satisfied that I am not an angel or Cato. My actions are conformable to what I am, and to my condition; I can do no better; and repentance is not properly concerned in things that are not in our power; sorrow is. I imagine an infinite number of natures more elevated and regular than mine; and yet I do not, for all that, improve my faculties; neither my mind nor my arm becomes more vigorous for conceiving that of another to be so. If to imagine and wish a nobler way of acting than that we have should produce a repentance of our own, we must then repent us of our most innocent actions, forasmuch, as we may well suppose that in a more excellent nature they would have been carried on with greater dignity and perfection; and would

Repentance, whence produced.

that ours were so. When I reflect upon the behaviour of my youth, and compare it with that of my old age, I find that I have acquitted myself with order in both, according to my capacity; this is all that my resistance can do. I do not flatter myself; in the same circumstances I should always be the same; it is not a spot, but rather a universal blot, with which I am stained. I know no lukewarm, superficial, ceremonious repentance; it must sting me to the quick, it must pierce into my bowels as deep, and seize me as universally, as God sees into me, before I can call it repentance.

As to employment, many good opportunities have escaped me for want of management; and yet my deliberations were sound enough, according to the occurrences presented to me; 'tis their way to choose always the easiest and the safest course. I find that in my former deliberations, I have proceeded with discretion, according to my own rule, and according to the state of the subject proposed, and should do the same for a thousand years to come on the like occasions; I do not consider what it is now, but what it was then, when I deliberated on it; the force of all counsel consists in the time; occasions and things eternally shift and change. I have in my life committed some great and important errors, not for want of good understanding, but for want of good luck. There are secret and not to be foreseen parts in matters we handle, especially in the nature of men; mute conditions, that make no show, unknown sometimes even to the possessors themselves, that spring and start up by accidental occasions; if my prudence could not penetrate into or foresee them, I blame it not; 'tis commissioned no farther than its own limits; if the event be too hard for me, and take the side I have refused, there is no remedy, I do not blame myself, I accuse my fortune, and not my work; this cannot be called repentance.

Counsel is independent of events.

Phocion, having given the Athenians an advice that was not followed, and the affair nevertheless succeeding contrary to his opinion, some one said

to him, "Well, Phocion, art thou content that matters go so well?" "I am very well pleased," replied he, "that this has happened so well; but I do not repent that I counselled the other."[1] When any of my friends address themselves to me for advice, I give it candidly and clearly, without sticking, as almost all other men do, at the hazard of the thing, that it may fall out contrary to my opinion, by which means I may be reproached for my counsel; I am very indifferent as to that, for the fault will be theirs in having consulted me; I could not refuse them my advice.

I, for my own part, can rarely blame any one but myself for my oversights and misfortunes; for, indeed, I seldom consult the advice of another, if not as a mere ceremony, or excepting where I stand in need of information as to matter of fact. But in things wherein I stand in need of nothing but judgment, other men's reasons may serve to fortify my own, but have little power to dissuade me; I hear them all with civility and patience; but, to my knowledge, I never made use of any but my own. With me they are but flies and atoms, that confound and distract my will; I lay no great stress upon my own opinions, but I lay as little upon those of others, and fortune rewards me accordingly. If I receive but little advice, I also give but little. I seldom consult others, and am seldom attended to; and know no concern, either public or private, that has been mended or bettered by my advice. Even they whom fortune had in some sort tied to my direction, have more willingly suffered themselves to be governed by any other counsels than mine. And, as a man who is as jealous of my repose as of my authority, I am better pleased that it should be so; leaving me there, they act according to my profession, which is to settle and wholly contain myself within myself. I take a pleasure in being uninterested in other men's affairs, and disengaged from being their guarantee, and responsible for what they do.

In all affairs that are past, be it how it will, I have very

[1] Plutarch, *Apothegms.*

little regret; for this imagination puts me out of my pain, that they ought to fall out so; they are in the great revolution of the world, and in the chain of stoical causes. Your fancy cannot, by wish and imagination, remove one tittle that the great current of things will not reverse, both the past and the future.

As to the rest, I abominate that accidental repentance which old age brings along with it. He[1] who said of old that he was obliged to his age for having weaned him from pleasure, was of an opinion very different from mine; I can never think myself beholden to impotency for any good it can ever do me: *Nec tam aversa unquam videbitur ab opere suo providentia, ut debilitas inter optima inventa sit.*[2] "Nor can providence ever be seen so averse to her own work, that debility should be ranked amongst the best things." Our appetites are rare in old age; a profound satiety seizes us after the act; I see nothing of conscience in this; heaviness and weakness imprint in us a drowsy and rheumatic virtue. We must not suffer ourselves to be so wholly carried away by natural alterations as to suffer them to adulterate our judgment. Youth and pleasure have not formerly so far prevailed upon me that I did not well enough discern the face of vice in pleasure; neither does that distaste, that years have brought me, so far prevail with me now that I cannot discern pleasure in vice; now that I am no more in my flourishing age, I judge as well of these things as if I were. I, who narrowly and strictly examine it, find my reason the very same that it was in my most licentious age, though perhaps a little weaker, and more decayed by being grown old; and I find that the pleasure she refuses me, upon the account of my bodily health, she would no more refuse now, in consideration of the health of my soul, than at any time heretofore. I do not repute her more valiant for being *hors de combat;* my

[1] This was Sophocles; who being asked if he still enjoyed the pleasures of love, made answer: "The gods have done better for me; and glad I am that I have lived to escape from the wild and furious tyranny of love." Cic. *de Senect.* cap. 14.

[2] Quint. *Inst. Orat.* v. 12.

temptations are so broken and mortified that they are not worth her opposition; holding but out my hands I repel them. Should one present her the old concupiscence, I fear she would have less power to resist it than heretofore; I do not discern that reason in herself judges any thing otherwise now than she formerly did, nor that she has acquired any new light; wherefore, if there be convalescence, 'tis from defect. Miserable kind of remedy, to owe a man's health to his disease! 'Tis not our misfortune that can perform this office, but the good fortune of our judgment. I am not to be made to do any thing by persecutions and afflictions, but to curse them; that is for people that are not to be roused but by a whip. My reason is much more active in prosperity, and much more distracted, and harder put to it to digest pains than pleasures; I see best in a clear sky. Health admonishes me more cheerfully, and consequently to a better purpose than sickness. I did all that in me lay to reform and regulate myself from pleasures at all times, when I had health and vigour to enjoy them. I should be troubled and ashamed that the misery and misfortune of my age should be preferred before my good, healthful, sprightly and vigorous years; and that men should esteem me, not for what I have been, but by that miserable part of myself where I have, as it were, ceased to be.

Wherein human felicity consists.

In my opinion 'tis "the happy living," and not, as Antisthenes said,[1] "the happy dying," in which human felicity consists. I have not made it my business to make a monstrous addition of a philosopher's tail to the head and body of a mere man; nor would I have this wretched remainder give the lie to the pleasant, sound, and long part of my life; I will present myself uniformly throughout. Were I to live my life over again, I should live it just as I have done. I neither complain of the past, nor do I fear the future; and, if I am not much deceived, I am the same within that I am without.

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

'Tis one main obligation I have to fortune, that the course of my bodily state has been carried on according to the natural seasons; I have seen the leaves, the blossoms, and the fruit, and now see the tree withered; happily, however, because naturally, I bear the infirmities I have the better, because they came not till I had reason to expect them; and also because they make me with greater pleasure remember that long felicity of my past life. In like manner, my wisdom perhaps may have been the same in both stages of life; but it was more active, and of a better grace whilst young, flourishing, sprightly, and ingenuous, than when broken, peevish, and uneasy, as it is at present. I renounce, then, these casual and painful reformations. God must touch our hearts; our consciences must amend of themselves, by the force of our reason, and not by the decay of our appetites; pleasure is in itself neither pale nor discoloured, because discerned by dim and decayed eyes.

We ought to love temperance for itself, and in obedience to God who has commanded it, and chastity; but what I am forced to by catarrhs, or owe to the stone, is neither chastity nor temperance. A man cannot boast that he despises and resists pleasure, if he cannot see it, if he knows not what it is, its graces, its force, its most alluring beauties; I know both the one and the other, and may therefore the better say it. But, methinks, our souls in old age are subject to more troublesome maladies and imperfections than in youth; I said the same when young, when I was reproached with the want of a beard; and I say so now, when my gray hairs give me some authority. We call the difficulty of our humours, and the disrelish of present things, wisdom; but, in truth, we do not so much forsake vices as we change them, and, in my opinion, for worse; besides a foolish and feeble pride, an impertinent prating, froward and unsociable humours, superstition, and a ridiculous desire of riches when we have lost the use of them, I find therein more envy, injustice, and malice; age imprints more wrinkles in the mind than it does on the

face; and souls are never, or very rarely seen, that, in growing old, do not smell sour and musty. Man moves altogether, both towards his perfection and decay. In observing the wisdom of Socrates, and many circumstances of his condemnation, I should dare to believe that he himself, by collusion, in some measure purposely contributed to it; fearing by a longer life, he having then reached his seventieth year, to see his lofty mind and universal knowledge cramped and stupefied by old age.[1] What strange metamorphoses do I see age make every day in many of my acquaintances! It is a powerful distemper, which naturally and imperceptibly steals in upon us; and therefore a vast provision of study and great precaution are absolutely necessary to avoid the imperfections it loads us with, or at least to weaken their progress. Notwithstanding all my retrenchments and redoubts, I find age gaining upon me inch by inch; I make as stout a defence as I can, but I am entirely ignorant whither it will drive me at last. At all events, I am satisfied that when I fall, the world may know whence I fell.

What is the wisdom of old men.

CHAPTER III.

OF THREE COMMERCES.

We must not rivet ourselves so close to our humours and complexions; our chiefest sufficiency is to know how to apply ourselves to divers customs. 'Tis to be, but not to live, to keep a man's self tied and bound by necessity to one only

[1] If this be a conjecture, only founded on Montaigne's sagacity, it does him very great honour; for Xenophon tells us expressly that, in truth, Socrates defended himself with so much haughtiness before his judges, only from a consideration, that, at his age, death would be better for him than life. This is the subject of the entire preface to "Defence made by Socrates before his Judges."

course; those are the bravest souls that have in them the most variety, and that are most flexible and pliant. Of which here is an honourable testimony of the elder Cato: *Huic versatile ingenium sic pariter ad omnia fuit, ut natum ad id unum diceres quodcumque ageret.*[1] "This man's parts were so convertible to all uses, that a man would think he was born only for what he was about." Might I have the liberty to dress myself after my own mode, there is no fashion so graceful to which I would be so fixed as not to be able to disengage myself from it; life is an unequal, irregular, and multiform motion. 'Tis not to be a friend to a man's self, much less his own master; 'tis to be his slave, so incessantly to be led by the nose by one's own inclinations, that a man cannot turn aside or wring his neck out of the collar. I speak it now in this part of my life, wherein I find I cannot disengage myself from the importunity of my soul, by reason that it cannot commonly amuse itself but on things wherein it is perplexed, nor employ itself but entirely, and with all its force; the lightest subject that can be offered, it makes infinitely greater, and stretches it to that degree as therein to employ its utmost power; wherefore its idleness is to me a very painful labour, and very prejudicial to my health. Most men's minds require foreign matter to exercise and enliven them; mine rather needs it to quiet and repose itself: *vitia otii negotiâ discutienda sunt;*[2] "the vices of sloth are to be shaken off by business;" for its chiefest and most painful study is to study itself. Books are to it a sort of employment that debauches it from its study; upon the first thoughts that possess it, it begins to bustle and make trial of its vigour in every way; exercises its power of handling, sometimes making trial of its force, and then fortifying, moderating, and ranging itself in the way of grace and order. It has of its own wherewith to rouse its faculties; nature has given to it, as to all others, matter enough of its own to make advantage of,

That our inclinations are not always to be followed.

[1] Livy, xxxix. 40.

[2] Senec. *Ep.* 56.

and subjects proper enough, where it may either invent or judge.

Meditation is a powerful and full study to such as can effectually employ themselves; I had rather fashion my soul than furnish it. There is no weaker or stronger occupation than that of entertaining a man's own thoughts according as the soul is; the greatest men make it their whole business, *quibus vivere est cogitare;*[1] "to whom to live is to think;" nature has also favoured it with this privilege, that there is nothing we can do so long, nor any action to which we more frequently, and with greater facility, addict ourselves. 'Tis the business of the gods, says Aristotle,[2] whence both their beatitude and ours proceed.

Meditation an important employment.

The principal use of reading to me is that, by various objects, it rouses my reason; it employs my judgment, not my memory. Few entertainments then detain me without force or violence; it is true that the beauty and neatness of a work takes as much, or more, with me than the weight and depth of the subject; and forasmuch as I slumber in all other communication, and give but a negligent attention, it often falls out that in such mean and pitiful discourses I either make strange and ridiculous answers, unbecoming a child, or, more indiscreetly and rudely, maintain an obstinate silence. I have a pensive way, that withdraws me into myself, and added to that a stupid and childish ignorance of many very ordinary things; by which two qualities it is come to pass that men may truly report five or six as ridiculous tales of me as of any other whatever.

But to proceed in my subject; this difficult complexion of mine renders me unfit for common matters, and very nice in my conversation with men, whom I must cull and pick out for my purpose. We live and negotiate with the people; if their conversation be troublesome to us, if we disdain to apply ourselves to mean

Montaigne was inattentive to frivolous conversation.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 38.

[2] *Ethics*, x. 8.

and vulgar understandings (and the mean and vulgar are often as regular as those of the finest thread; and all wisdom is folly, that does not accommodate itself to the common ignorance), we must no more intermeddle either with other men's affairs or our own; and all business, both public and private, must be managed apart from such people. The least forced and most natural motions of the soul are the most beautiful; the best employments those that are least constrained. Great God! how good an office does wisdom perform to those whose desires it limits to their power! That is the most useful knowledge. "According to what a man can," was the sentence which Socrates was so much in love withal,[1] a motto of great substance. We should moderate and adapt our desires to the nearest and easiest to be acquired things. Is it not a foolish humour of mine to separate myself from a thousand to whom my fortune has attached me, and without whom I cannot live, to cleave to one or two that are out of my commerce, or rather to a fantastic desire of a thing I cannot obtain? My soft, indolent manners, enemies of all sourness in conversation, may easily enough have secured me from the envy and animosities of men; I do not say to be beloved, but never any man gave less occasion to be hated; but the coldness of my conversation has reasonably enough deprived me of the good-will of many, who are to be excused if they interpret it in another and worse sense.

Montaigne passionately fond of exquisite friendships, but not qualified to cultivate common friendships.

I am very capable of contracting and preserving uncommon and exquisite friendships; and the more so, because I greedily seize upon such acquaintance as fit my liking; I throw myself with such violence upon them that I hardly fail to stick, and generally make an impression where I aim, of which I have made often happy proof. In common friendships I am cold and shy; for my motion is not natural if not with full sail; besides, my fortune having trained me up from my youth in, and given me a relish of, one sole and

[1] Xenophon, *Mem. of Socrates*, i. 3, 3.

perfect friendship, it has in truth given me a kind of disgust to others, and too much imprinted in my mind that it is a beast of company, as the ancient[1] said, but not of the herd. Besides that, I have a natural difficulty in communicating myself by halves, and with that reserved, and servile, and jealous prudence dictated to us in the conversation of numerous and imperfect friendships; and we are principally enjoined to these in this age of ours, when we cannot talk of the world but either with danger or falsehood.

How useful it is to know how to treat all manner of persons with familiarity.

Yet do I very well discern that he who has the conveniences (I mean the essential conveniences) of life for his end, as I have, ought to fly this difficulty and refinement of humour, as much as the plague. I should commend a mind of various stages, that knows both how to extend and to slacken itself; that finds itself at ease in all conditions of fortune; that can discourse with a neighbour about building, hunting, or any little contest betwixt him and another; and that can chat with a carpenter or a gardener with pleasure. I envy those who can make themselves familiar with the meanest of their followers, and converse among their own attendants; and I dislike the advice of Plato,[2] that men should always speak in a magisterial tone to their domestics, whether men or women, without ever being facetious and familiar. For besides my former reason, it is inhuman and unjust, to set so great a value upon this pitiful prerogative of fortune; and the governments, wherein less disparity is permitted betwixt masters and servants, seem to me the most equitable. Others study how to raise and elevate their minds; I, how to humble mine and to bring it low; 'tis only vicious in extension:—

Magisterial language to servants reproved.

> Narras et genus Æaci,
> Et pugnata sacro bella sub Ilio:
> Quo Chium pretio cadum
> Mercemur, quis aquam temperet ignibus,

[1] Plutarch, *on the Plurality of Friends*, 4.

[2] *On Laws*, vi

Quo præbente domum, et quota,
Pelignis caream frigoribus, taces.[1]

"And Æacus's glorious race,
And the fam'd siege of sacred Troy relate.

"But when a cheerful fire shall blaze,
Or how a Chian cask will sell,
Who treats to-night, or merits praise,
For tempering th' bath, you spare to tell."

Thus, as the Lacedemonians' valour stood in need of moderation, and of the sweet and harmonious sound of flutes to soften it in battle, lest it should precipitate itself into temerity and fury, whereas all other nations commonly make use of harsh and shrill sounds, and of loud and impetuous voices, to incite and heat the soldiers' courage to the last degree; so, methinks, that contrary to the usual method, in the practice of our minds, we have for the most part more need of lead than wings; of temperance and composedness than ardour and agitation. But above all things, 'tis, in my opinion, egregiously to play the fool, to put on the gravity of a man of understanding amongst those that know nothing; to speak in print, *favellar in punta di forchetta.* You must descend to those with whom you converse, and sometimes affect ignorance; lay aside strength and subtlety in common conversation; 'tis enough there to preserve order; as to the rest, flag as low as the earth, if they desire it.

Whether women ought to be learned.

The learned often stumble at this stone; they will be always showing off and parading their books. They have in these days so filled the cabinets and the ears of the ladies with them, that if they have lost the substance, they at least retain the words; so that in discourse upon all sorts of subjects, how mean and common soever, they speak and write after a new and learned way,

Hoc sermone pavent, hoc iram, gaudia, curas,
Hoc cuncta effundant animi secreta; quid ultra?
Concumbunt docte;[2]

[1] Horace, *Od.* iii. 19, 3.

[2] Juvenal, vi. 189.

> "All now is Greek: in Greek their souls they pour,
> In Greek their fears, hopes, joys; what would you more?
> In Greek they clasp their lovers;"

and quote Plato and Aquinas in things which the first they meet could determine as well. The learning that cannot penetrate their souls, hangs still upon the tongue. If the ladies will be persuaded by me, they will content themselves with setting out their proper and natural wealth; they conceal and cover their beauties under others that are none of theirs; 'tis a great folly to put out their own light, to shine by a borrowed one; they are interred and buried under art, *de capsulâ totæ*.[1] It is because they do not sufficiently know themselves; the world has nothing fairer; 'tis for them to honour the arts, and to paint painting. What need they but to live beloved and honoured? They have and know but too much for that; they need do no more, but rouse and heat a little the faculties they have of their own. When I see them tampering with rhetoric, law, logic, and the like drugs, so improper and unnecessary for their business, I begin to suspect that the men who advise them to such things, do it that they may govern them upon that account; for what other excuse can I contrive? It is enough that they can, without our instruction, govern the graces of their eyes to gayety, severity, and sweetness, and season a denial either with anger, suspense, or favour, and that they need not another to interpret what we speak for their service; with this knowledge they command the switch, and rule both the teachers and the schools. But if, nevertheless, they think it too much to give place to us in any thing whatever, and will out of curiosity have their share in books, poetry is a diversion proper for them; 'tis a wanton and subtle, a dissembling and prat-

Poesy allowed to women.

[1] This is an expression of Seneca, which he applies to the petits maîtres of his time: "Nosti complures juvenes barbâ et comâ nitidos de capsulâ totos."—*Epist.* 95. He tells us elsewhere of one of these fops who, being carried by his slaves from the bath in a chair, thought fit to ask them whether or no he was seated? as if it was a thing beneath his honour to know what he did himself without asking.—Seneca, *de Brevit. Vitæ*, cap. 12. I have not yet heard that any of our petits maîtres have come up to this Roman fop.

ing art, all pleasure and all show, like themselves. They may also extract several advantages from history. In philosophy, out of the moral part of it, they may select such instructions as will teach them to judge of our humours and conditions, to defend themselves from our treacheries, to regulate the ardour of their own desires, to manage their liberty, lengthen the pleasures of life, and mildly to bear the inconstancy of a servant, the rudeness of a husband, and the assaults of years, wrinkles, and the like. This is the utmost of what I would allow them in the sciences.

What kind of philosophy is proper for women.

There are some particular natures that are private and retired; my natural form is proper for communication, and apt to lay me open; I am all without and in sight, born for society and friendship. The solitude that I love myself, and recommend to others, is chiefly no other than to withdraw my thoughts and affections into myself; to restrain and check, not my steps, but my own cares and desires; resigning all extrinsic solicitude, and mortally avoiding servitude and obligations; and not so much the crowd of men as the crowd of business. Local solitude, to say the truth, rather gives me more room, and sets me more at large; I more willingly throw myself upon affairs of state and the world when I am alone; at the Louvre, and in the bustle of the court, I fold myself within my own skin; the crowd thrusts me upon myself, and I never entertain myself so wantonly, so unrestrainedly, or so particularly, as in places of respect and ceremonious prudence; our follies do not make me laugh, but our wisdom. I am naturally no enemy to a court-life, I have therein passed a good part of my own, and am of a humour to be cheerful in great companies, provided it be by intervals, and at my own time; but this softness of judgment whereof I speak ties me by force to solitude. Even in my own house, in the middle of a numerous family, and a house sufficiently frequented, I see people enough, but rarely such with whom I delight to converse; and I there reserve,

The good use of retirement.

both for myself and others, an unusual liberty; there is there no ceremony, no ushering or waiting upon people to their coach, and such other troublesome forms as our courtesy enjoins; O servile and tiresome custom! Every one there governs himself according to his own method; let who will speak his thoughts, I sit mute, meditating and shut up in myself, without any offence to my guests.

Character of the men whose familiarity is worth seeking.

The men whose society and familiarity I covet, are those they call honest, sensible men, and the image of these makes me disrelish the rest. It is, if rightly taken, the most uncommon of our forms, yet a form chiefly owing to nature. The end of this commerce is simply privacy, frequentation, and conference, the exercise of souls, without other fruit. In our discourse, all subjects are alike to me; let there be neither weight nor depth, 'tis all one, there is yet grace and pertinency; all there is tinctured with a mature and constant judgment, and mixed with freedom, gayety, goodness, and friendship. 'Tis not only in talking of the affairs of kings and states, that our minds discover their force and beauty, but every jot as much in private affairs; I understand my men even by their silence and smiles; and better discover them perhaps at table than in the council; Hippomachus[1] said, very well, that he could know the good wrestlers by only seeing them walk in the street. If learning will please to take a share in our talk, it shall not be rejected, nor magisterial, imperious, and importunate, as it commonly is, but suffragan and docile itself; we there only seek to amuse ourselves, and to pass away our time agreeably; when we have a mind to be instructed and preached to, we will go seek it in its throne; let it abase itself to us for once, if it so please; for, useful and profitable as it is, I take it that, even in the greatest need, we may do well enough without it, and perform our business though we have not its assistance. A man well born and practised in the conversation of men will, by the strength of his own genius, render

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Dion*, c. 1.

himself agreeable to all. Art is nothing but the observation and register of what such noble minds produce.

The conversation also of beautiful and well-bred women is also for me an agreeable commerce: *Nam nos quoque oculos eruditos habemus.*[1] "For we too have eyes that can see." If the soul has not therein so much to enjoy as in the first, the bodily senses, which participate so much the more of this, bring it to a proportion near to, though, in my opinion, not equal to the other. But 'tis a commerce wherein a man must stand a little upon his guard, especially those of an excitable constitution as I am. I burned myself that way in my youth, and suffered all the torments that poets say are inflicted on those who precipitate themselves into love without order or judgment; it is true that this lash of the whip has since been a good monitor to me;

> Quicumque Argolicâ de classe Capharea fugit,
> Semper ab Euboicis vela retorquet aquis.[2]

> "The Grecian ship that could Caphareus flee
> Will always steer from the Euboic sea."

'Tis folly to fix all a man's thoughts upon it, and madness to engage in it with a furious and indiscreet affection. But, on the other hand, to engage in it without love and without inclination, like comedians, to play a common part, without putting any thing to it of his own but words, is indeed to provide for his safety, but withal after as base and cowardly a manner as he who should abandon his honour, profit, or pleasure, for fear of danger; for it is most certain that from such a practice they who set it on foot can expect no fruit that can please and satisfy a noble soul. A man must have in good earnest desired that which he, in good earnest, expects to have a pleasure in enjoying; I say, though fortune should unjustly favour their dissimulation, which often happens, because there is none of the sex, let her be as ugly as the devil, who does not think herself well worthy to be beloved, and that does not

[1] Cicero, *Paradox.* v. 2. [2] Ovid, *Trist.* i. 183.

recommend herself either by her youth, her fine hair, or her graceful motion (for women totally ugly there are none, any more than women perfectly beautiful); and the Brachman virgins, who have no other recommendation, the people being assembled by the common crier to that effect, come out into the market-place to expose their matrimonial parts to public view, to try if these at least will not suffice to get them husbands; consequently there is not one who does not easily suffer herself to be persuaded by the first vow that is made to serve her. Now from this common treachery of men, that must fall out, which we already experimentally see, either that women rally together and separate themselves by themselves to avoid us; or else form their discipline by the example we give them, play their part in the farce as we do ours, and give themselves up to the sport, without passion, care, or love: *Neque affectui suo, aut alieno, obnoxiæ;*[1] "Unswayed by passion, whether their own or another's;" believing, according to the persuasion of Lysias in Plato,[2] that they may with more utility and convenience surrender themselves up to us the less we love them; where it will fall out, as in comedies, that the people will have as much pleasure, or more, than the comedians. For my part, I no more acknowledge Venus without Cupid than a mother without issue; they are things that mutually lend and owe their essence to one another. This cheat rebounds back upon him who is guilty of it; it does not cost him much, indeed, but he also gets little or nothing by it. They who have made Venus a goddess have taken notice that her principal beauty was incorporeal and spiritual; but the Venus which these people hunt after is not so much as human, nor indeed brutal. The very beasts will not accept one so gross and so earthly; we see that imagination and desire often heat and incite them before the body does; we see, in both the one sex and the other, that they have in the herd a choice and particular election in their affections, and that they have amongst themselves a long commerce of good-

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* xii. 45. [2] In the *Phædra.*

will; even those to whom old age denies the practice of their desire, do yet tremble, neigh, and show ecstacies of love; we see them before the act full of hope and ardour; and when the body has played its part, yet please themselves with the sweet remembrance of the pleasure past; some that swell with pride after they have performed, and others who, tired and sated, do yet by various joyous sounds express a triumphing joy. The man that has nothing to do, but only to discharge his body of a natural necessity, need not trouble others with such curious preparations; it is not meat for a gross and coarse appetite.

Montaigne's taste in his amours.

As one who does not desire that men should think me better than I am, I will here freely discover the errors of my youth. Not only for the danger of impairing my health (and yet I could not be so careful but that I had two light mischances), but moreover, upon the account of contempt, I have seldom given myself up to common and mercenary embraces; I having tried to heighten the pleasure by the difficulty, by desire, and a certain kind of glory; and was of Tiberius's mind, who in his amours was as much taken with modesty and birth as any other quality;[1] and of the courtesan Flora's humour, who never prostituted herself to less than a dictator, a consul, or a censor, and solaced herself in the dignity of her lovers.[2] Doubtless pearls and brocade, titles and attendants, add something to it.

Personal beauties preferable in amours to those of the mind.

As to the rest, I had a great esteem for wit, provided the person was without bodily exception; for, to confess the truth, if the one or the other of these two perfections must of necessity be wanting, I should rather have quitted that of the understanding, that has its use in better things; but in the matter

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* vi. 1.

[2] Montaigne got this from Anton. de Guevara. It is also borrowed by Brantome, who in his *Vies des Femmes Galantes*, tom. i., says that the courtesan Flora was of a good family and lineage; and that whereas Laïs was a common prostitute to all mankind, Flora only obliged the great, insomuch that she had this inscription over her door: "Ye kings, princes, dictators, consuls, pontiffs, questors, ambassadors, and other great men, enter, and welcome; but no others."

of love, a matter principally relating to the senses of seeing and touching, something may be done without the graces of the mind; without the graces of the body, nothing. Beauty is the true prerogative of women; and so peculiarly their own, that ours, though naturally requiring another sort of feature, is never in its lustre but when puerile and beardless, confused and mixed with theirs. 'Tis said that such youths as are preferred by the grand signior upon the account of beauty, which are an infinite number, are at the farthest dismissed at two and twenty years of age. Reason, prudence, and offices of friendship, are better found amongst men, and therefore it is that they govern the affairs of the world.

Of reading, or the third sort of conversation.

These two commerces are fortuitous, and depending upon others; the one is troublesome by its rarity, the other withers by age; so that they could never have been sufficient for the business of my life. That of books, which is the third, is much more certain, and much more our own; it yields all other advantages to the other two; but has the constancy and facility of its service for its own share. It goes side by side with me in my whole course, and everywhere is assisting to me; it comforts me in my age and solitude; it eases me of a troublesome weight of idleness, and delivers me at all hours from company that I dislike; and it blunts the point of griefs if they are not extreme, and have not got an entire possession of my soul. To divert myself from a troublesome fancy 'tis but to run to my books; they presently fix me to them, and drive the other out of my thoughts; and do not mutiny, at seeing I have only recourse to them for want of other more real, natural, and lively conveniences; they always receive me with the same kindness. "He may well go a-foot," say they, "who leads his horse in his hand;" and our James, King of Naples and Sicily, who, handsome, young, and healthy, caused himself to be carried up and down on a hand-barrow, reclining on a pitiful feather pillow, and clad

in a robe of coarse gray cloth, with a cap of the same, but attended nevertheless by a royal train of litters, led horses of all sorts, gentlemen and officers, therein showed but a weak and unsteady austerity; the sick man is not to be pitied who has his cure in his sleeve. In the experience and practice of this sentence, which is a very true one, all the benefit I reap from books consists; and yet I make as little use of it almost as those who know it not; I enjoy it as a miser does his money, in knowing that I may enjoy it when I please; my mind is satisfied with this right of possession. I never travel without books, either in peace or war; and yet sometimes I pass over several days, and sometimes months, without looking at them; I will read by and by, say I to myself, or to-morrow, or when I please, and time meanwhile steals away without any inconvenience; for it is not to be imagined to what degree I please myself, and rest content in this consideration, that I have them by me, to divert myself with them when I am so disposed, and call to mind what an ease and assistance they are to my life. 'Tis the best viaticum I have yet found out for this human journey, and I very much pity those men of understanding who are unprovided with it. I rather accept of any sort of diversion, how light soever, in the feeling that this can never fail me.

When at home, I a little more frequent my library, from whence I at once survey all the whole concerns of my family. As I enter it, I thence see under me my garden, court, and base-court, and into all the parts of the building. There I turn over now one book, and then another, of various subjects, without method or design. One while I meditate; another I record, and dictate as I walk to and fro, such whimsies as these with which I here present you. 'Tis in the third story of a tower, of which the ground-room is my chapel, the second story an apartment with a withdrawing-room and closet, where I often lie to be more retired; above it is this great wardrobe, which formerly was the most useless part of the house. In that

The situation of Montaigne's library.

room I pass away most of the days of my life, and most of the hours of the day; in the night I am never there. There is within it a cabinet handsome and neat enough, with a very convenient fireplace for the winter, and windows that afford a great deal of light, and very pleasant prospects; and were I not afraid, less of the expense than of the trouble, that frights me from all business, I could very easily adjoin on either side, and on the same floor, a gallery of an hundred paces long, and twelve broad, having sound walls already raised for some other design, to the requisite height. Every place of retirement requires a walk; my thoughts sleep if I sit still; my fancy does not go by itself, my legs must move it; and all those who study without a book are in the same condition. The figure of my study is round, and has no more bare wall than what is taken up by my table and chair; so that the remaining parts of the circle present me a view of all my books at once, set upon five rows of shelves round about me. It has three noble and wide prospects, and is sixteen paces in diameter. I am not so continually there in winter; for my house is built upon an eminence, as its name imports, and no part of it is so much exposed to the wind and weather as that, which pleases me the better for being of troublesome access and a little remote, as well upon the account of exercise, as being also there more retired from the crowd. 'Tis there that I am in my kingdom, and there I endeavour to make myself an absolute monarch, and to sequester this one corner from all society, whether conjugal, filial, or social; elsewhere I have but verbal authority only, and of a confused essence. That man, in my opinion, is very miserable, who has not at home where to be by himself, where to entertain himself alone, or to conceal himself from others. Ambition sufficiently plagues her votaries by keeping them always in show, like the statue in a market-place: *Magna servitus est magna fortuna:*[1] "A great fortune is a great slavery:" they have not so much as a retreat for the neces-

[1] Seneca, *Consol. ad Polyb.* c. 26.

sities of nature. I have thought nothing so severe in the austerity of life that our religions affect, as what I have observed in some of their orders; namely, to have a perpetual society of place by rule, and numerous assistants among them, in every action whatever; and think it much more supportable to be always alone, than never to be so.

If any one shall tell me that it is to degrade the muses to make use of them only for sport, and to pass away the time, I shall tell him that he does not know the value of that sport and pastime so well as I do; I can hardly forbear to add further, that all other end is ridiculous. I live from hand to mouth, and, with reverence be it spoken, only live for myself; to that all my designs tend, and in that terminate. I studied when young for ostentation; since, to make myself wise; and now for my diversion; never for gain. A vain and prodigal humour that I had after this sort of furniture, not only for supplying my own need, but moreover for ornament and outward show, I have long ago quite abandoned.

The inconveniences attached to the pleasure which books give.

Books have many charming qualities to such as know how to choose them; but every good has its ill; 'tis a pleasure that is not pure and unmixed any more than others; it has its inconveniences, and great ones too; the mind, indeed, is exercised by it, but the body, the care of which I have not forgotten, remains in the mean time without action, grows heavy and melancholy. I know no excess more prejudicial to me, nor more to be avoided in this my declining age.

These are my three favourite and particular occupations; I speak not of those which I owe to the world by civil obligation.

CHAPTER IV.

OF DIVERSION.[1]

I WAS formerly employed to console a lady under a real affliction; for most of their mournings are merely artificial and a matter of ceremony.

What women's mournings commonly are.

> Uberibus semper lacrymis, semperque paratis
> In statione suâ, atque expectantibus illam,
> Quo jubeat manare modo.[2]
>
> "And bids
> Th' impassioned showers fall copious from her lids,
> For at their posts like marshall'd troops they stand,
> Prepar'd to flow, to pour, at her command."

A man goes the wrong way to work when he opposes this passion; for opposition does but irritate and make them more obstinate in sorrow; the evil is exasperated by being contended with. We see, in common discourse, that the same thing that I have let fall from me with indifference, if a man controverts what I have said, I insist upon it earnestly, and with the best arguments I can find; and much more a thing wherein I have a real interest. And besides, in so doing, you enter rudely upon your operation; whereas the first addresses of a physician to his patient should be gracious, gay, and pleasing; never did any ill-looking, morose physician do any thing to the purpose. On the contrary, then, a man should at the first approaches favour their grief, and express some approbation of their sorrow. By this intelligence you obtain credit to proceed farther, and after an easy and insensible manner fall into discourses more solid and proper for their cure. I, whose aim it was principally to gull those present, who had their

How consolation ought to be practised.

[1] Or turning aside.

[2] Juvenal vi. 272.

eyes fixed upon me, desired only to plaster up the disease And indeed I have found out by experience that I have an unlucky hand at persuading; my arguments are either too sharp or too flat, and either press too roughly, or not home enough. After I had some time applied myself to her grief, I did not attempt to cure her by strong and lively reasons, either because I wanted them, or because I thought to do my business better another way; neither did I insist upon a choice of any of those methods of consolation which philosophy describes; "that what we pity is no evil," according to Cleanthes;[1] "that it is a light evil," according to the Peripatetics; "that to bemoan one's self is an action neither commendable nor just," according to Chrysippus; nor this of Epicurus, more suitable to my way, of shifting the thoughts from afflicting things to those that are pleasing; nor making a bundle of all these together, to dispense upon occasion, according to Cicero; but gently bending my discourse, and by little and little digressing, sometimes to subjects nearer, and sometimes more remote from the purpose, she was more intent on what I said, and I insensibly led her from her sorrow, and kept her calm and in good humour whilst I continued there. I herein made use of diversion. They who succeeded me in the same service did not for all that find any amendment in her, for I had not applied the axe to the root.

The method of diverting the enemy, employed successfully in war and in negotiations.

Perhaps I have touched elsewhere upon some sort of public diversions; and the practice of military ones, which Pericles made use[2] of in the Peloponnesian war, with a thousand others in different places, to withdraw the adverse forces from their own countries, is too frequent in history. It was an ingenious evasion, by which[3] the Sieur d'Himbercourt saved himself and others in the city of Liege, into which the Duke of Burgundy, who kept it besieged, had sent him, to execute the articles of their promised surrender. The people, being

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iii. 31.
[2] Plutarch, *in Vitâ.*
[3] Mem. of Philip de Comines, book ii. c. 3.

assembled at night to consider the matter, began to mutiny against the past agreement, and to that degree that several of them resolved to fall upon the commissioners, whom they had in their power. He feeling the first blast of this first storm of the people, who were coming to rush into his lodgings, on the sudden sent out to them two of the inhabitants of the city (of whom he had some with him), with new and milder terms, to be proposed in their council, which he had forged on the spot for his occasion. These two diverted the first tempest, carrying back the enraged rabble to the town hall, to hear and consider of what they had to say. The deliberation was short; a second storm arose, as impetuous as the other; whereupon he dispatched four new mediators of the same quality to meet them, protesting that they had now better conditions to present them with, and such as would give them absolute satisfaction; by which means the tumult was once more appeased, and the people again turned back to the conclave. In fine, by thus ordering these amusements, one after another, diverting their fury and dissipating it in frivolous consultations, he laid it at last asleep till the day appeared, which was his principal end.

This other story is also in the same category; Atalanta, a virgin of excelling beauty and of wonderful disposition of body, to disengage herself from the crowd of a thousand suitors, who sought her in marriage, made this proposition, "that she would accept of him for a husband who should equal her in running, upon condition that they who failed should lose their lives."[1] There were enough who thought the prize worth the hazard, and who suffered the penalty of the bloody contract. Hippomenes, being to try his fortune after the rest, makes his address to the Goddess of Love, imploring her assistance, who granted his request, gave him three golden apples, and instructed him how to use them. The ground they ran upon being an even plain, as Hippomemes perceived his mistress to press hard upon him, he, as it were by chance,

[1] Ovid. *Met.* x. 571.

let fall one of these apples; the maid, taken with the beauty of it, failed not to step out of her way to take it up:—

> Obstupuit virgo, nitidique cupidine pomi
> Declinat cursus, aurumque volubile tollit.[1]

> "Th' astonished maiden saw the shining gold,
> And stopped her course to seize it as it rolled;"

He did the same when he saw his time, by the second and third, till, by so diverting her, and making her lose so much ground, he won the race. When physicians cannot purge a catarrh, they divert and turn it into some other less dangerous part. And I find also that this is the most ordinary practice for the diseases of the mind: *Abducendus etiam nonnunquam animus est ad alia studia, sollicitudines, curas, negotia; loci denique mutatione, tanquam ægroti non convalescentes sæpe curandas est;*[2] "The mind is sometimes to be diverted to other studies, thoughts, cares, and business, and lastly, by change of place; as sick persons that do not else recover are cured by change of air." 'Tis to little effect directly to jostle a man's infirmities, we neither make him sustain nor repel the attack; but only to decline and evade it.

This other lesson is too high and too difficult; 'tis for men of the first class purely to insist upon the thing, to consider and judge of it; it belongs to a Socrates only to entertain death with an indifferent countenance, to grow acquainted with it, and to sport with it; he seeks no consolation out of the thing itself; dying appears to him a natural and indifferent proceeding; 'tis there that he fixes his sight and resolution, without looking elsewhere. The disciples of Hegesias starved themselves to death,[3] inflamed with a desire of dying, by his fine lectures, and this was so frequent a thing that King Ptolemy ordered he should be forbidden to entertain his followers with such homicidal doctrines; such people do not consider death itself, neither do they judge of it; it is not

[1] Ovid. *Met.* x 666.
[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 35.
[3] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 34. Val. Max viii. 9, *Ext.* 3.

there that they fix their thoughts; they run forwards, and aim at a new being.

The poor wretches that we see brought to the place of execution, full of ardent devotion, and therein, as much as in them lies, employing all their senses, their ears in hearing the instructions that are given them, their eyes and hands lifted up towards heaven, their voices in loud prayers, with a vehement and continual emotion, do doubtless things very commendable and proper for such a necessity; we ought to commend them for their devotion, but not properly for their constancy; they shun the encounter, they divert their thoughts from the consideration of death, as children are amused with some toy or other, when the surgeon is going to give them a prick with his lancet. I have seen some who, casting sometimes their eyes upon the dreadful instruments of death round about, have fainted, and furiously turned their thoughts elsewhere; such as are to pass a formidable precipice are advised either to shut their eyes or look another way.

Whether it is owing to a firmness of soul that those who are going to die on a scaffold give way to violent fits of devotion.

Subrius Flavius being, by Nero's command, to be put to death, and by the hand of Niger, both of them captains, when they led him to the place appointed for his execution, seeing the hole that Niger had caused to be hollowed to put him into, badly made: "Neither is this," said he, turning to the soldiers who guarded him, "according to military discipline." And to Niger, who exhorted him to keep his head firm: "Do but thou strike as firmly," said he; and he very well foresaw what would follow, when he said so; for Niger's arm so trembled that he had several blows at his head before he could cut it off.[1] This man seems to have had his thoughts rightly fixed upon the subject.

He that dies in a battle, with his sword in his hand, does not then think of death; he neither feels nor considers it; the ardour of the fight diverts his thoughts another way. A gentleman of my

Whether men think much of death in battle or a duel.

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* xv. 67.

acquaintance, falling as he was fighting a duel at single rapier, and feeling himself nailed to the earth by nine or ten thrusts of his enemy, after he was on the ground, the seconds called to him to think of his conscience; but he has since told me that, though he heard what they said, it nothing moved him, and that he never thought of any thing but how to disengage and revenge himself; he afterwards killed his man in that very duel. He who brought L. Silvanus the sentence of death did him a very great kindness, in that, having received his answer, "that he was well prepared to die, but not by scoundrel hands,"[1] he ran upon him with his soldiers, to force him; and as he, naked as he was, obstinately defended himself with his fists and feet, he made him lose his life in the dispute; by that means dissipating and diverting, in a sudden and furious rage, the painful idea of a lingering death, to which he was designed.

The different considerations which hinder us from thinking directly of death.

We always think of something else; either the hope of a better life comforts and supports us, or the hope of our children's worth, or the future glory of our name, or the leaving behind the evils of this life, or the vengeance that threatens those who are the causes of our death, administers consolation to us:—

> Spero equidem mediis, si quid pia numina possunt,
> Supplicia hausurum scopulis, et nomine Dido
> Sæpe vocaturum. . . . . .
> Audiam; et hæc manes veniet mihi fama sub imos.[2]

> "And if the gods have any power at all,
> Thrown on a rock thou shalt on Dido call;
> At least my shade thy punishment shall know,
> And fame shall spread the pleasing news below."

Xenophon was sacrificing with a crown upon his head, when one came to bring him news of the death of his son Gryllus, slain in the battle of Mantinea; at the first surprise of the news he threw his crown to the ground; but understanding, by the sequel of the narrative, that his son died in

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* xvi. 9. [2] *Æneid*, iv. 382.

a most brave and valiant manner, he took it up and replaced it upon his head.[1] Even Epicurus at his death comforts himself with reflections of the usefulness and eternity of his writings:[2] *omnes clari et nobilitati labores fiunt tolerabiles;*[3] "all labours that are illustrious and renowned are supportable;" and the same wound, the same fatigue, is not, says Xenophon, so intolerable to a general of an army as to a common soldier;[4] Epaminondas died much more cheerful, having been informed that the victory remained to him; *hæc sunt solatia, hæc fomenta summorum dolorum;*[5] "these are lenitives, and fomentations to the greatest pains;" and other such circumstances amuse, divert, and turn our thoughts from the consideration of the thing in itself. Even the arguments of philosophy are always diverting, and putting by the matter, so as scarce to rub upon the sore; the greatest man of the first philosophical school, and superintendent over all the rest, the great Zeno against death, forms this syllogism; "No evil is honourable; but death is honourable; therefore death is not evil;"[6] against drunkenness this: "No one commits his secrets to a drunkard, but every one commits his secrets to a wise man; therefore a wise man is no drunkard."[7] Is this to hit the mark? I love to see that these great and leading souls cannot rid themselves of our company; as perfect men as they may be, they are yet but men.

The way to dissipate a violent longing for revenge.

Revenge is a sweet passion, of great and natural impression; I discern this well enough, though I have no manner of experience of it. From which, not long ago, to divert a young prince, I did not tell him that if a man struck him on one cheek he must turn the other to him, to fulfil the duties of charity; nor did I go about to represent the tragical events which poetry attributes to that passion; I left those strings untouched, and

1 Val. Max. iv. 10. *Ext.* 2. Diog. Laertius, *in Vitâ.* Ælian, *Hist. Var.* iii. 3.
2 In his *Letter to Hermachus.* Cicero, *de Finib.* ii. 30. Laertius, *in Vitâ.*
3 Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* ii. 24.
4 Id. *ib.* 25.
5 Id. *ib.*
6 Seneca, *Epist.* 82.
7 Id. *ib.* 83.

occupied myself with making him relish the beauty of a contrary image; by representing to him what honour, esteem, and good-will he would acquire by clemency and good-nature, I diverted him to that ambition. Thus a man is to deal in such cases.

If your passion of love be too violent disperse it, say they; and they say well; for I have oft tried it with advantage; break it into several desires, of which let one be regent, if you will, over the rest; but, lest it should tyrannize and domineer over you, weaken and protract, in dividing and diverting it:—

> Cum morosa vago singultiet inguine vena;[1]
>
> Conjicito humorem collectum in corpora quæque;[2]

and look to't in time, lest it prove too troublesome to deal with, when it has once seized you;

> Si non prima novis conturbes vulnera plagis,
> Volgivagaque vagus venere ante recentia cures.[3]

> "Unless you fancy every one you view
> Revel in love, and cure old wounds by new."

I once was wounded with a vehement displeasure, according to my complexion; and withal, more just than vehement; I might perhaps have lost myself in it, if I had merely trusted to my own strength. Having need of a powerful diversion to disengage me, I made it my business, by art and study, to fall in love, in which I was assisted by my youth; love relieved and rescued me from the evil wherein friendship had engaged me. 'Tis in every thing else the same; a violent imagination hath seized me; I find it a nearer way to change than to subdue it; I depute, if not one contrary, yet another at least in its place; variation always relieves, dissolves, and dissipates. If I am not able to contend with it, I escape from it; and in avoiding it, slip out of the way and cheat it; shifting place, business, and company, I secure my-

[1] Pers. vi. 73. [2] Lucret. iv. 1062. [3] Id. *ib.*

self in the crowd of other thoughts and fancies, where it loses my trace, and I escape.

After the same manner does nature proceed, by the benefit of inconstancy; for time, which she has given us as the sovereign physician of our passions, principally gains its effect by this means; by supplying our imaginations with other and new affairs, it unties and dissolves the first apprehension, how strong soever. A wise man sees his friend little less dying at the end of five and twenty years, than in the first year; and, according to Epicurus, not less at all; for he did not attribute any alleviation of afflictions either to our foresight, or to the antiquity of the evils themselves; but so many other thoughts traverse the first, that it languishes and tires at last.

Time the physician of our passions.

Alcibiades, to divert the inclination of common rumours, cut off the ears and tail of his beautiful dog, and turned him out into the public place, to the end that, giving the people this occasion to prate, they might let his other actions alone.[1] I have also seen, for this same end of diverting the opinions and conjectures of the people, and to stop their mouths, some women conceal their real affections by others that were only counterfeit; but I have likewise seen one who, in counterfeiting, has suffered herself to be caught indeed, and has quitted the true and original affection for the feigned; by which I have learned that they who find their affections well placed are fools to consent to this disguise; the favourable and public reception being only reserved for this apposted servant, a man may conclude him a fellow of very little address, if he does not in the end put himself into your place, and you into his; this is properly to cut out and make up a shoe for another to draw on.

A little thing will turn and divert us, because a little thing holds us. We do not much consider subjects in gross and in themselves; but

A small matter either engages or disengages the mind.

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 4.

there are little and superficial circumstances that strike us, the vain, useless husks that fall off from those subjects,

> Folliculos ut nunc teretes æstate cicadæ
> Linquunt;[1]
>
> "Such as the hollow husks or shells we find
> In summer, grasshoppers do leave behind."

Even Plutarch himself laments his daughter for the little apish tricks of her infancy.[2] The remembrance of a farewell, of a particular action or grace, of a last recommendation, afflicts us. The sight of Cæsar's robe troubled all Rome, which was more than his death had done. Even the sound of names ringing in our ears, as "My poor master!" or "My valued friend!" "Alas! my dear father!" or "My sweet daughter!" makes us melancholy and sad. When these repetitions torment me, and that I examine them a little nearer, I find them but a grammatical and verbal complaint; I am wounded with the word and tone; as the exclamations of preachers very often work more upon their auditory than their reasons, and as the mournful eyes and voice of a beast killed for our service; without my weighing or penetrating at the same time into the true and real essence of my subject:—

> His se stimulis dolor ipse lacessit;[3]
>
> "With these incitements grief itself provokes;"

these are the foundations of our mourning.

The obstinacy of the stone has sometimes thrown me into so long a suppression of urine, for three or four days together, and so near death, that it had been folly to have hoped to evade it; and it was much rather to have been desired, considering the miseries I endure in those cruel fits. Oh, how great a master in the art of hangmanship was that worthy emperor,[4] who caused criminals to be tied in such a manner, that they might die for want of making water! Finding myself in this condition, I considered by how many light

[1] Lucret. v. 801.
[2] In his *Consolation to his Wife.*
[3] Lucret. ii. 42.
[4] *Tiberius.* Suetonius, *in Vitâ*, c. 69

causes and objects imagination nourished in me the regret of life; and of what atoms the weight and difficulty of this dislodging was composed in my soul; and to how many idle and frivolous thoughts we give way in so great an affair; a dog, a horse, a book, a glass, and what not, were considered in my loss; in others, their ambitious hopes, their money, their knowledge, not less foolish considerations in my opinion than mine. I look upon death carelessly, when I look upon it universally as the end of life. I insult over it in gross; but in retail it domineers over me; the tears of a footman, the disposing of my clothes, the touch of a friendly hand, an ordinary phrase of consolation, discourages and melts me. Thus do the complaints in poetry infect our souls with grief; and the sorrows of Dido and Ariadne touch with compassion even those that don't believe in them, in Virgil and Catullus. It is an example of an obstinate and obdurate nature to be sensible of no emotion; as 'tis reported for a miracle of Polemon; but then he did not so much as alter his countenance at the biting of a mad dog, that tore away the calf of his own leg.[1] And no wisdom proceeds so far as to conceive so lively and entire a cause of sorrow by judgment, that it suffers no increase by presence, where the eyes and ears have their share; parts that are not to be moved but by vain accidents.

The orator and the comedian touched to the quick by acting their parts, though in fiction.

Is it reason that even the arts themselves should make an advantage of our natural imbecility and weakness? The orator, says rhetoric, in the farce of his pleading, shall be moved with the sound of his own voice and feigned emotions, and suffer himself to be imposed upon by the passion he represents; he will imprint in himself a true and real grief by means of the part he plays, to transmit it to the judges, who are yet less concerned than he; as they do who are hired at funerals to assist in the ceremony of sorrow, who sell their tears and mourning by weight and measure. For although they act in

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

a borrowed form, nevertheless by habituating themselves, and settling their countenances to the occasion, 'tis most certain they are often really affected with a true and real sorrow. I was one, among several other of his friends, who conveyed the body of Monsieur de Grammont[1] to Soissons, from the siege of la Fere, where he was slain; I observed that in all places we passed through we filled the people with tears and lamentations, by the mere solemn pomp of our convoy, for there the name of the deceased was not so much as known. Quintilian reports[2] to have seen players so deeply engaged in a mourning part, that they could not give over weeping when they came home; and of himself, that having undertaken to stir up that passion in another, he himself espoused it to that degree as to find himself surprised not only into tears, but even with paleness, and the port of a man really overwhelmed with grief.

A pleasant method of diverting one's grief.

In a place near our mountains the women play Priest Martin;[3] for as they augment the regret of the deceased husband, by the remembrance of the good and agreeable qualities he was master of, they also at the same time make a register of and publish his imperfections; as if of themselves to enter into some compensation, and so divert themselves from compassion to disdain; and yet with much better grace than we do, who, when we lose an old acquaintance, strive to give him new and false praises, and to make him quite another thing when we have lost sight of him, than he seemed to be when we had him; as if regret was an instructive thing, or as if tears enlightened our understanding by washing it. For my part I renounce all favourable testimonies men would hereafter give of me, not because I shall be worthy of them, but because I shall be dead.

[1] Philibert, Count of Grammont and Guiche, husband of *La Belle Corisande*, already referred to. He was killed in 1580, at the siege of la Fere, undertaken on the part of the League by the Marshal de Matignon.

[2] *Instit. Orat.* vi. 2.

[3] A proverb, founded on the story of a priest, named Martin, who himself acted as both parson and clerk.

Whoever shall ask a man, "What interest have you in this siege?" "The interest of example," he will say, "and of common obedience to my prince; I pretend to no profit by it; and for glory, I know how small a part can reflect upon such a private man as I am; I have here neither passion nor quarrel in it." And yet you shall see him the next day, quite another man, chafing and red with fury, ranged in battle for the assault; 'tis the glittering of so much steel, the fire and noise of our cannons and drums, that have infused this new rancour and fury into his veins. A frivolous cause, you will say: how a cause? There needs none to agitate the soul; a mere whimsey, without body and without subject, will rule and sway it. Let me set about building castles in the air, my imagination suggests to me conveniences and pleasures with which my soul is really tickled and pleased. How often do we torment our mind with anger or sorrow by such shadows, and engage ourselves in fantastic passions that alter both the soul and body? What astonished, fleering, and confused grimaces does this raving put our faces into! What sallies and agitation, both of members and voices, does it occasion! Does it not seem that this individual man has false visions from a crowd of other men with whom he has to do, or that he is possessed with some internal demon that persecutes him? Enquire of yourself, where is the object of this mutation? Is there any thing but us in nature that nullity sustains, over which nullity has power? Cambyses, for having dreamt that his brother should be one day king of Persia, put him to death; a brother whom he tenderly loved, in whom he had always confided.[1] Aristodemus, king of the Messenians, killed himself out of a fancy of ill omen, from I know not what howling of his dogs;[2] and King Midas did as much upon account of some foolish dream he had.[3] 'Tis to prize life at its just value to abandon it for a dream. Hear

Vain objects of mere imaginations, without reality, strike and determine the human mind.

[1] Herod. iii. 30.
[2] Plutarch, *On Superstition*, c. 9.
[3] Id. *ib.*

how our soul triumphs over the body, and the weakness that exposes it to every injury and alteration; truly, she has just reason to laugh at it!

> O prima infelix fingenti terra Prometheo!
> Ille parum cauti pectoris egit opus.
> Corpora disponens, mentem non vidit in arte;
> Recta animi primum debuit esse via.[1]

> "O, 'twas for man a most unhappy day,
> When rash Prometheus form'd him out of clay!
> In his attempt the heedless architect
> Did indiscreetly the main thing neglect.
> In framing bodies he had not the art
> To form the mind, the first and noblest part."

CHAPTER V.

UPON SOME VERSES OF VIRGIL.

In proportion as useful thoughts are full and solid, so are they also more cumbersome and heavy; vice, death, poverty, disease, are grave and grievous subjects. A man must have his soul instructed in the means to sustain and to contend with evil, and in the rules of living and believing well; he must likewise often rouse it up, and exercise it in this noble study. But in a vulgar soul, it must be by intervals, and with moderation; it will otherwise grow besotted, if continually intent.

When I was young, I had need of frequent self-solicitations and admonitions to keep me to my duty; gayety and health, it is said, do not so well agree with those grave and serious meditations; I am at present in another condition; the indispositions of age do but too much advertise and preach to me. From the excess of sprightliness I am fallen into that of

[1] Propertius, iii. 5, 7.

gravity, which is more troublesome; and for that reason I now purposely suffer myself to run into some little liberties, and sometimes unbend my mind with youthful and foolish thoughts, in which to divert itself. I am grown now but too full, too heavy, and too ripe; my years read every day new lectures to me of coldness and temperance. This body of mine avoids disorder, and dreads it; 'tis now my body's time to guide my mind towards reformation; it governs in its turn, and more rudely and imperiously than the other; it lets me not an hour alone, sleeping or waking; but is always preaching to me death, patience, and repentance. I now defend myself from temperance, as I formerly did from voluptuousness; it draws me too much back, even to stupidity. Now I will be master of myself to all intents and purposes; wisdom has its excess, and has no less need of moderation than folly. Therefore, lest I should wither, dry up, and overcharge myself with prudence, in the intervals and truces which my infirmities allow me,—

Mens intenta suis ne siet usque malis,[1]

"Lest that my mind should evermore be bent,
And fix'd on subjects full of discontent,"

I gently decline it, and turn away my eyes from the stormy and frowning sky I have before me, which, thanks be to God, I consider without fear, but not without meditation and debate, and amuse myself in the remembrance of my past youth:—

Animus quod perdidit optat,
Atque in præteritâ se totus imagine versat.[2]

"The mind longs to regain what it has lost,
And by things past is totally engross'd."

Let infancy look forward and age backward; is not this the signification of Janus's double face? Let years haul me along, if they will, but it shall be backward! As long as my eyes can discern the pleasant season expired, I shall now and

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* i. 4. The text has *ne foret*

[2] Petronius, *Satiric.* c. i. 28.

then turn them that way; though it escapes from my blood and my veins, I shall not however root the image of it out of my memory:—

Hoc est
Vivere bis, vitâ posse priore frui.[1]

"The man lives twice, who can the gift retain
Of mem'ry, to enjoy past life again."

Old men should be present at the pastimes and exercises of youth.

Plato ordains[2] that old men should be present at the exercises, dances, and sports of young people, that they may rejoice, in others, for the activity and beauty of body which is no more in themselves, and recall to memory the grace and comeliness of that flourishing age; and wills that in these recreations, the honour of the prize should be given to that young man who has most diverted the company. I formerly used to mark cloudy and gloomy days for extraordinary; those are now my ordinary ones; the extraordinary are the clear and bright; I am ready to leap out of my skin for joy, as for an uncommon favour, when nothing ails me. Let me tickle myself presently after, I cannot force a poor smile from this wretched body of mine; I am only merry in fancy, or dreaming, by artifice to divert the melancholy of age; but, certes, it requires another remedy than the efficacy of a dream. A weak contest of art against nature! 'Tis great folly to lengthen and anticipate human inconveniences, as every one does. I had rather be a less while old, than be old before I am really so.[3] I seize on even the least occasions of pleasure I can meet. I know very well by hearsay several sorts of prudent pleasures, that are effectually so, and glorious to boot; but opinion has not power enough over me to give me an appetite to them. I covet not so much to have them magnanimous, magnificent, and lofty, as I do to have them soft, easy, and ready: *a naturâ discedimus; populo nos da-*

[1] Mart. x. 23.
[2] *Laws*, ii.
[3] This is word for word the same passage in Cicero (*de Senect.* c. 14), for which Montaigne (book ii. c. 10), criticizes that author.

mus, nullius rei bono auctori :[1] "we depart from nature, and give ourselves to the people, who understand nothing." My philosophy is in action, in natural and present use, very little in fancy; what if I have a mind to play at cob-nut, or to whip a top!

Non ponebat enim rumores ante salutem.[2]

"He was too wise
Idle reports before his health to prize."

Pleasure is a quality of very little ambition; it thinks itself rich enough of itself, without any addition of repute; and is best pleased where most obscure. A young man should be whipped who pretends to a palate in wine and sauces; there was nothing which at that age I less valued or knew; now I begin to learn, I am very much ashamed of it; but what should we do? I am more ashamed and vexed at the occasions that put me upon it. 'Tis for us to fiddle-faddle and trifle away the time; and for young men to stand upon their reputation and punctilios; they are going towards the world, and the world's opinion; we are retiring from it: *Sibi arma, sibi equos, sibi hastas, sibi clavam, sibi pilam, sibi natationes et cursus; habeant nobis senibus, ex lusionibus multis, talos relinquant et tesseras:*[3] "Let them reserve to themselves arms, horses, spears, clubs, tennis, swimming, and races; and, of their numerous sports and exercises, leave to us old men the diversion of cards and dice:" the laws themselves send us home.[4] I can do no less, in favour of this wretched condition, into which my age has thrown me, than furnish it with toys to play withal, as they do children; for we also become such. Both wisdom and folly will have enough to do to support and relieve me by alternate offices in this calamity of age:—

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 99.

[2] This is a very pleasant application of a grave verse, quoted out of Ennius, by Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 24, where that poet, speaking of Fabius Maximus, says that, while he was acting for the public good, he was indifferent to every thing that was said at Rome to run down his conduct.

[3] Cicero, *de Senect.* c. 16.

[4] Id. *ib.* c. 11.

Misce stultitiam consiliis brevem.[1]

"Severer cares with mirth relieve,
And a few hours to folly give."

Just so do I avoid the lightest punctures; and those that formerly would not have rippled the skin, now pierce me through and through; my habit of body is now so naturally open to the stroke of pain! *In fragili corpore odiosa omnis offensio est;*[2] "To a decrepit body every shock is hateful:"—

Mensque pati durum sustinet ægra nihil.[3]

"And a sick mind nothing that's hard endures."

I have ever been tender, and very susceptible of bodily injury; at present I am much more tender, and open throughout:—

Et minimæ vires frangere quassa valent.[4]

"A cracked pitcher is soon broken."

My judgment restrains me from kicking against and grumbling at the inconveniences that nature orders me to endure, but it does not take away my feeling; I, who have no other object in view than to live and be merry, would run from one end of the world to the other, to seek out one good year of pleasant and jocund tranquillity. A melancholic and dull tranquillity seems enough for me; but it benumbs and stupefies; I am not contented with it. If there be any person, any knot of good company, in country or city, in France or elsewhere, stay-at-home or travelling, who can like my humour, and whose humours I can like, let them but whistle, and I will come and furnish them with Essays in flesh and bone.

Seeing it is the privilege of the mind to rescue itself from old age, I advise mine to it, with all the power I have; let it in the interim continue green, and flourish, if it can, like

[1] Horace, *Od.* iv. 12, 27.
[2] Cicero, *ut supra*, c. 18.
[3] Ovid, *de Ponto.* i. 5, 18.
[4] Id. *Trist.* iii. 11, 22.

mistletoe upon a dead tree. But I fear 'tis a traitor; it has contracted so stiff a brothership with the body that it abandons me at every turn, to follow that in its need; I wheedle and deal with it apart in vain; I try to no purpose to wean it from this correspondence; in vain quote Seneca and Catullus, and represent to it beautiful ladies and royal dances; if its companion has the cholic it seems to have it too; even the faculties that are most peculiarly and properly its own, cannot then perform their functions, but manifestly appear dozed and stupefied; there is no sprightliness in its productions, if there be not at the same time an equal proportion in the body too.

The health and vigour of the body is the cause of the extraordinary sallies of the mind.

Our masters are to blame that, searching out the causes of the extraordinary emotions and sallies of the soul, besides attributing them to a divine ecstasy, love, martial fierceness, poetry, and wine, they have not also allowed health her share in them; boiling, vigorous, full, idle health, such as formerly the verdure of youth and security kept me supplied withal; that fire of sprightliness and gayety darts into the mind flashes that are lively and bright beyond our natural light, and with the most working, if not the most extravagant enthusiasms. It is then no wonder if a contrary state stupefies my spirit, nails it down, and produces a contrary effect:—

Ad nullum consurgit opus cum corpore languet;[1]

"For when the body languishing doth lie,
I to no object can myself apply;"

and yet would have me obliged to it for giving much less consent to this than is seen in other men ordinarily. Let us at least, whilst we have truce, drive away incommodities and difficulties from our commerce:—

Dum licet, obductâ solvatur fronte senectus;[2]

"Drive care, with age's wrinkled front, away;"

tetrica sunt amœnanda jocularibus.[3] "Sour things are to be

[1] Pseudo-Gallus, i. 125.
[2] Horace, *Epod.* xiii. 7.
[3] Sidonius Apollinar. *Ep.* i. 9.

sweetened with those that are pleasant." I love a gay and social wisdom, and fly from all austerity and sourness of manners, all grumness and formality of countenance being suspected by me :—

> Tristemque vultus tetrici arrogantiam;
>
> "The arrogant affectation of a starched, dismal face;"
>
> Et habet tristis quoque turba cinædos.[1]
>
> "A mien austere oft veils a vicious heart."

I entirely believe Plato, who says that easy or difficult humours are a great prejudice to the good or bad disposition of the soul. Socrates had a constant countenance, but withal serene and smiling; not sourly constant, like the elder Crassus, whom no man ever saw to laugh.[2] Virtue is a pleasant and gay quality.

Montaigne's opinion of those who shall condemn the freedom of his writings.

I know very well that few will quarrel with the liberty of my writings, who have not more to quarrel with in the license of their own thoughts: I conform myself well enough to their inclinations, but I offend their eyes. 'Tis a pretty humour to strain at the writings of Plato, and glide gently over his pretended negotiations with Phædo, Dion, Aster, and Archeanassa! *Non pudeat dicere quod non pudeat sentire.* "Let us not be ashamed to speak what we are not ashamed to think." I hate a froward and moping spirit, that slips over all the pleasures of life, and seizes and feeds upon misfortunes; like flies, that cannot stick to a sleek and polished body, but fix and repose themselves upon craggy and rough places; and like cupping-glasses, that only suck and attract the worst blood.

Of the liberty he takes to say all that he dares to do.

As to the rest, I have enjoined myself to dare to say all that I dare to do; and even thoughts that are not to be published displease me; the worst of my actions and qualities do not appear to

[1] Martial, vii. 58. It is not known whence Montaigne borrowed the preceding line.

[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* vii. 19.

me so foul, as I find it foul and base not to dare to own them. Every one is wary and discreet in confession, but men ough. to be so in action; boldness in doing ill is in some sort modified and restrained by boldness in confessing it; whoever would oblige himself to tell all, would oblige himself to do nothing that he must be forced to conceal. I wish that this excessive license of mine may draw men to freedom, above these timorous and mincing pretended virtues, sprung from our imperfections; and that, at the expense of my immoderation, I may reduce them to reason. A man must see and study his vice to correct it; they who conceal it from others commonly conceal it from themselves, and do not think it covered enough, if they themselves see it; they hide and disguise it from their own conscience: *Quare vitia sua nemo confititur? Quia etiam nunc in illis est; somnium narrare vigilantis est.*[1] "Why does no man confess his vices? Because he is yet in them; 'tis for a waking man to tell his dream." The diseases of the body explain themselves in increasing; we find that to be the gout which we called a rheum or a strain; the diseases of the soul, the greater they are, keep themselves the more obscure; the most sick are the least sensible of them; for these reasons they must often be dragged into light by an unrelenting and pitiless hand; they must be opened and torn from the caverns and secret recesses of the heart. As in doing well, so in doing ill, the mere confession is sometimes satisfaction. Is there any deformity in doing amiss, that can excuse us from confessing ourselves? It is so great a pain to me to dissemble, that I evade the trust of another's secrets, wanting the heart to disavow my knowledge; I can conceal it, but deny it I cannot, without the greatest trouble and violence to myself imaginable; to be very secret, a man must be so by nature, not by obligation. 'Tis little worth in the service of a prince to be secret, if a man be not a liar to boot. If he who asked Thales, the Milesian, whether he ought solemnly to deny that he had

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 53.

committed uncleanness, had applied himself to me, I should have told him that he ought not to do it; for I look upon lying to be a greater crime than the other. Thales advised him quite contrary,[1] bidding him swear to secure himself the greater fault by the less; nevertheless this counsel was not so much an election as a multiplication of vice. Upon which, let me say this by the by, that we deal sincerely and well with a man of conscience, when we propose to him some difficulty in counterpoise of a vice; but when we shut him up betwixt two vices, he is put to a hard choice, as Origen was, either to idolatrize or to suffer himself to be carnally abused by a great Æthiopian slave that was brought to him; he submitted to the first condition, as it is said. And yet tastes differ; witness those women of our times who, according to their error, protest they had rather burden their consciences with ten men than one mass.

If it be indiscretion so to publish one's errors, yet there is no great danger of its passing into example and custom; for Aristo said,[2] that the winds which men feared most were those that laid them open. We must tuck up this ridiculous rag that hides our manners; people send their consciences to the stews, but keep a starched countenance. Even traitors and assassins espouse the laws of ceremony, and there fix their duty; so that neither can justice complain of incivility, nor malice of indiscretion. 'Tis pity but an ill man should be likewise a fool, and that decency should palliate his vice; this rough-casting is only for sound and good walls, that deserve to be preserved and whited.

To meet the Huguenots, who condemn our auricular and private confession, I confess myself in public, religiously and purely; St. Augustin, Origen, and Hippocrates, have

[1] Here Montaigne makes Thales say the very contrary to what he really said; and this, by mistaking the sense of Diogenes Laertius, the author whom he must have consulted for the answer: "A man," says Diogenes, "who had committed adultery, having asked Thales whether he might not deny it upon oath? Thales made answer, 'But is not perjury even a worse crime than adultery?'" See Diogenes' *Life of Thales*. Perhaps Montaigne was deceived by some edition of this author, where the note of interrogation was omitted after the last word, which, indeed, is an omission that I find in Henry Wetstein's edition, which, excepting that, is very correct.

[2] Plutarch, *on Curiosity*, c. 3.

published the errors of their opinions; and I moreover of my manners. I am greedy of making myself known; and I care not to how many, provided it be truly; or, rather, I hunger for nothing: but I mortally hate to be mistaken by those who happen to come across my name. He that does all things for honour and glory, what can he think to gain by showing himself to the world in a mask, and by concealing his true being from the people? Commend a hunchback for his fine shape, he has a right to take it for an affront; if you are a coward, and that men commend you for your valour, is it of you that they speak? They take you for another. A footman behind a coach might as well glorify himself in the compliments and congees which are made, as if he were master of the company, when he is one of the most inferior of the train. Archelaus, King of Macedon, walking along the street, somebody threw water on his head; which they who were with him said he ought to punish: "Aye, but," said he, "whoever it was, he did not throw the water upon me, but upon him whom he took me to be."[1] Socrates being told that people spoke ill of him: "Not at all," said he, "there is nothing in me of what they say."[2] For my part, if any one should commend me for a good pilot, for being very modest or very chaste, I should owe him no thanks; and, by the same rule, whoever should call me traitor, robber, or drunkard, I should be as little concerned. They who do not rightly know themselves, may feed and feast upon false approbations; not I, who see myself, and examine myself even to my very bowels, and who very well know what is my due. I am content to be less commended, provided I am better known. I may be reputed a wise man in such a sort of wisdom, as I take to be folly. I am vexed that my *Essays* only serve the ladies for a common movable, a book to lie in the parlour window; this chapter shall prefer me to the closet; I love to traffic with them a little in private; public conversation is

Why Montaigne chose to be confessed in public.

[1] Plutarch, *Apotheg. of the Kings.* [2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

without favour and without savour. In farewells we above ordinary heat our affections towards the things we take leave of; I take my last leave of the pleasures of this world; these are our last embraces.

But to come to my subject. What has rendered the act of generation, an act so natural, so necessary, and so just, a thing not to be spoken of without blushing, and to be excluded from all serious and regular discourses? We boldly pronounce kill, rob, betray,[1] but the other we dare only to mutter betwixt the teeth. Is it to say, that the less we say in words, we may pay it so much the more with thinking? For it is certain that the words least in use, most seldom writ, and best kept in, are the best and most generally known; no age, no manners, are ignorant of them, any more than of the word bread. They imprint themselves in every one, without being expressed, without voice, and without figure; and the sex that most practises it is bound to say least of it. 'Tis an act that we have placed in the free franchise of silence, whence to take it is a crime, even though it be to accuse and judge it; neither dare we reprehend it, but in periphrasis and circuity. A great favour to a criminal, to be so execrable that justice itself thinks it unjust to touch and see him! free and safe by the benefit of the severity of his condemnation. Is it not here as with books, that sell better and become more public, by being suppressed? For my part, I will take Aristotle at his word, who says that "bashfulness is an ornament to youth, but a reproach to old age."[2] These verses are preached in the ancient school, a school that I much more adhere to than the modern; the virtues of it appear to me to be greater, and the vices less:—

> They err as wide who Venus much forbear,
> As they who in her rites too frequent are.[3]

> Tu, dea, tu rerum naturam sola gubernas,
> Nec sine te quidquam dias in luminis oras
> Exoritur, neque sit lætum, nec amabile quidquam.[4]

[1] See Cicero, *Epist. Fam.* ix. 22.
[2] *Ethics*, iv. 9.
[3] Plutarch, *That a Philosopher should converse with Princes*, c. 5.
[4] Lucret. i. 22.

"Thou deity, by whom all nature's sway'd,
Without whose power nothing can spring to light,
Or beautiful, or lovely to the sight."

I know not who could set Pallas and the Muses at variance with Venus, and make them cold towards love; but I see no deities so well met, or that are more indebted to one another. Whoever would deprive the Muses of amorous imaginations, would rob them of the best stuff they have, and of the noblest matter of their work; and who would make love lose the communication and service of poetry, would disarm him of his best weapons; in this way they charge the god of familiarity and good-will, and the protecting goddesses of humanity and justice, with the vice of ingratitude and unthankfulness. I have not been so long cashiered from the state and service of this god, that my memory is not still perfect in his force and power:—

Pallas and the Muses are in a great connection with Venus.

Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ;[1]

"Of my old flame there yet remain some sparks;"

there are yet some remains of heat and emotion after the fever:—

Nec mihi deficiat calor hic, hiemantibus annis![2]

"I have some heat yet in my winter age!"

Withered and drooping as I am, I feel yet some remains of that past ardour:—

Qual l'alto Egeo per che Aquilone o Noto
Cessi, che tutto prima il volse et scosse,
Non s' accheta egli pero; ma l' suono e' l moto,
Ritien dell'onde anco agitate e grosse:[3]

"As Ægean seas, when storms be calmed again,
That roll'd their tumbling waves with troublous blast,
Do yet of tempests past some show retain,
And here and there their swelling billows cast;"

but, for what I understand of it, the force and power of this

1 *Æneid*, iv. 23.
2 It is not known whence Montaigne borrowed this line; probably from some modern author.
3 Tasso, *La Gerus.* c. xii. st. 63.

god are more lively and animating in the picture of poetry than in their own essence,—

Et versus digitos habet:[1]

"For there is charming harmony in verse:"

it has I know not what kind of air more amorous than love itself; Venus is not so beautiful naked, alive, and panting, as she is here in Virgil:—

Dixerat; et niveis hinc atque hinc Diva lacertis
Cunctantem amplexu molli fovet. Ille repente
Accepit solitam flammam; notusque medullas
Intravit calor, et labefacta per ossa cucurrit:
Non secus atque olim tonitru cum rupta corusco
Ignea rima micans percurrit lumine nimbos.
. . . . Ea verba loquutus,
Optatos dedit amplexus; placidumque petivit
Conjugis infusis gremio per membra soporem.[2]

"She said, and round him threw her snow-white arms,
And warmed him, wavering, in a soft embrace.
Swift he takes fire, and through his marrow came
Accustom'd heat, the wonted amorous flame:
So amidst thunder lanced along the sky;
A stream of fire runs glittering through the sky.
. . . . . .
This having said,
After the wish'd embrace, he sank to rest,
Softly reclin'd on his fair consort's breast."

The transports of love banished from marriage; and why.

All that I find fault with in considering it is, that he has represented her a little too passionate for a married Venus; in this discreet kind of coupling, the appetite is not usually so wanton, but more grave and dull. Love hates that people should hold of any but himself, and goes but faintly to work in familiarities derived from any other title, as marriage is. Alliance and dowry therein weigh, and with reason, as much or more than grace and beauty. Men do not marry for themselves, though they say so; they marry as much or more for their posterity, for their family; the use and

[1] Juvenal, vi. 196. [2] *Æneid*, viii. 387, 392.

interest of marriage touches our race much more than us; and therefore it is that I like that custom to have matches carried on by a third hand, rather than a man's own, and by another man's liking than that of the party himself; but how much is all this opposite to the ties of love? And also it is a kind of incest to employ, in this venerable and sacred alliance, the heat and extravagance of amorous license, as I think I have said elsewhere.[1] A man, says Aristotle, must approach his wife with prudence and gravity, lest, in tickling her up too lasciviously, extreme pleasure make her exceed the bounds of reason. What he says upon the account of conscience, the physicians say upon the account of health: "That a pleasure excessively hot, voluptuous, and frequent, deteriorates the seed and hinders conception;" and 'tis said, elsewhere, "that to a languishing congression, as that naturally is, to supply it with a due and fruitful heat, a man must do it but seldom, and by marked intermissions;"—

Quo rapiat sitiens Venerem, interiusque recondat.[2]

I see no marriages where the conjugal understanding sooner fails, than those contracted upon the account of beauty and amorous desires; there should be more solid and lasting foundations, and they should proceed with greater circumspection; this furious ardour is worth nothing.

They who think they honour marriage by joining love to it, do, methinks, like those who, to favour virtue, hold that nobility is nothing else but virtue. They are, indeed, things that have some relation to one another, but there is a great deal of difference; we should not so mix their names and titles; 'tis a wrong to them both so to confound them. Nobility is a brave quality, and with good reason introduced; but, forasmuch as 'tis a quality depending upon others, and may happen in a vicious person, 'tis to be estimated infinitely below virtue; 'tis a virtue, if it be one, that is artificial and apparent; depending upon time and fortune; various in form,

[1] Book i. c. 29. [2] Virgil, *Georgic.* iii. 137.

according to various countries; living, and mortal; without birth, as the River Nile; genealogical and common; drawn by consequence, and a very weak one. Knowledge, strength, goodness, beauty, riches, and all other qualities, fall into communication and commerce; but this is consummated in itself, and of no use to the service of others. There was proposed to one of our kings the choice of two concurrents, who both pretended to the same command, of which one was a gentleman, the other was not; he ordered that, without respect to quality, they should choose him who had the most merit; but where the worth of the competitors should appear to be entirely equal, they should have respect to birth; this was exactly to give it its due rank. A young man, unknown, coming to Antigonus to make suit for his father's command, a valiant man, lately dead: "Friend," said he, "in such preferments as these, I have not so much regard to the nobility of my soldiers, as to their strength and courage."[1] And, indeed, it ought not to go as it did with the officers of the kings of Sparta, trumpeters, fiddlers, cooks, the children of whom always succeeded in their places, how ignorant soever, and were preferred before the most experienced in these professions. They of Calicut make of their nobles a class above human; they are interdicted marriage, and all but warlike employments; they may have concubines their fill, and the women as many lovers as they please, without being jealous of one another; but 'tis a capital and irremissible crime to couple with a person of meaner condition than themselves; and they think themselves polluted, if they have but touched one in walking along, and supposing their nobility to be marvellously injured and interested in it, kill such as only approach a little too near them; insomuch that the ignoble are obliged to cry out as they go, like the gondoliers of Venice, at the turning of streets for fear of jostling; and the nobles command them to step aside to what part they please; by which means the one avoid

To what rank the nobility are promoted in the kingdom of Calicut.

[1] Plutarch, *On False Shame*, c. 10.

what they repute a perpetual ignominy, and the other a certain death. No time, no favour of the prince, no office, or virtue, or riches, can ever prevail to make a plebeian become noble; to which this custom is assisting, that marriages are interdicted betwixt several trades; the daughter of a shoemaker cannot marry a carpenter; and the parents are obliged to train up their children precisely in their own callings, and not put them to any other trade; by which means the distinction and continuation of their fortune is maintained.

A good marriage,[1] if it be really so, rejects the company and conditions of love, and tries to represent those of friendship. 'Tis a sweet society of life, full of constancy, trust, and an infinite number of useful and solid offices and mutual obligations; of which any woman that has a right taste,

> Optato quam junxit lumine tæda,[2]
>
> "The wife of him she loves,"

would be loth to serve her husband in quality of a mistress. If she be lodged in his affection as a wife, she is more honourably and securely placed. Though he play the lover with another, as eager and warm as you please, let any one but then ask him, "on which he had rather a disgrace should fall, his wife or his mistress? which of their misfortunes would most afflict him? and to which of them he wishes the most grandeur?" the answer to these questions there can be no doubt about in a sound marriage.

A good marriage the most happy state in human society.

And that so few are observed to be happy, is a token of its price and value. If well formed, and rightly taken, 'tis the best of all human societies. We cannot live without it, and yet we do nothing but degrade it. It happens as with cages; the birds without despair to get in, and those within despair of getting out. Socrates being asked[3] whether it was more advisable to take

[1] Charron (*De la Sagesse*), in his *Essay on Marriage*, has largely availed himself of Montaigne; as, indeed, he has throughout his work.

[2] Catullus, *de Coma Beren. Carm.* lxiv 79.

[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

a wife or not? "Let a man take which course he will," said he, "he will be sure to repent." 'Tis a contract to which the common saying, *Homo homini deus, or lupus:*[1] "Man to man is either a god or a wolf," may very fitly be applied; there must be a concurrence of many qualities to the erecting it. It is found nowadays more convenient for ordinary and plebeian souls, where delights, curiosity, and idleness, do not so much disturb it; but unruly humours, such as mine, that hate all sorts of obligation and restraint, are not proper for it:—

Et mihi dulce magis resoluto vivere collo.[2]

"For liberty is far more sweet to me."

Why Montaigne married, though ill disposed for it.

Might I have had my own will, I would not have married Wisdom herself, if she would have had me; but 'tis not to much purpose to evade it, the common custom and use of life will have it so; the most of my actions are guided by example, not choice. And yet I did not go to it of my own voluntary motion, I was led and drawn to it by extrinsic occasions; for not only things that are incommodious in themselves, but also none so ugly, vicious, and to be avoided are there, that may not be rendered acceptable by some condition or accident; so unsteady and vain is all human resolution. And I was persuaded to it when worse prepared and more backward than I am at present, that I have tried what it is. And as great a libertine as I am taken to be, I have in truth more strictly observed the laws of marriage than I either promised or expected. 'Tis vain to kick when a man has once put on his fetters. A man must prudently manage his liberty; but having once submitted to obligation, he must confine himself within the laws of common duty, at least do what he can towards it. They who engage in this contract, and carry themselves in it with hatred and con-

Marriage ought to be exempt from hatred and contempt.

[1] The first sentence, *Homo homini deus*, is from the poet Cecilius, *apud* Symmach. *Epist.* x. 104. The other, *homo homini lupus*, is in Plautus, *Asin.* II. iv. 88.
[2] *Pseudo.* Gallus, i. 61.

tempt, do an unjust and inconvenient thing; and the fine rule that I hear pass from hand to hand amongst the women, as a sacred oracle:—

> "Serve thy husband like a waiter,
> But guard thyself as from a traitor;"

which is to say: "Comport thyself towards him with a dissembled, inimical, and distrustful reverence, and respect," a watchword of war and suspicion, is equally injurious and hard. I am too mild for such rugged designs; to say the truth, I am not arrived to that perfection of cunning and gallantry of wit, to confound reason with justice, and to laugh at all rule and order that does not please my palate; because I hate superstition, I do not presently run into irreligion. If a man does not always perform his duty, he ought at least to love and acknowledge it; 'tis treachery to *marry* without *espousing*. Let us go on.

Our poet represents a marriage happy in good understanding, wherein, nevertheless, there is not much loyalty. Does he mean that it is not impossible to give the reins to passion, and yield to the importunities of love, and yet reserve some duty towards marriage; and that it may be hurt without being totally broken? A serving-man may ride in his master's saddle, whom nevertheless he does not hate. Beauty, opportunity, and destiny, (for destiny has also a hand in it,—

> Fatum est in partibus illis
> Quas sinus abscondit: nam, si tibi sidera cessent,
> Nil faciet longi mensura incognita nervi.[1]

> "Fate with full power presides
> E'en o'er those parts which modest nature hides;
> And little, if her genial influence fail,
> Will vigour stead, or boundless hopes avail,")

have debauched her to a stranger; though not so wholly, peradventure, but that she may have some remains of kindness for her husband. They are two designs, that have sev-

[1] Juvenal, ix. 32.

eral paths leading to them, without being confounded with one another; a woman may yield to such a man as she would by no means have married, not only by reason of the condition of his fortune, but by that of his person. Few men have made a wife of a mistress, that have not repented it; and even in the other world, what an unhappy life did Jupiter lead with his, whom he had first enjoyed as a mistress! 'Tis, as the proverb is, "To befoul a basket, and then to put it upon one's head." I have in my time seen love shamefully and dishonestly cured in a good family by marriage; the considerations are altogether different. 'Tis to say we love at once two things contrary in themselves, without any disturbance. Isocrates said[1] that the city of Athens pleased as ladies do that men court for love; every one was delighted to come thither to take a turn, and pass away his time; but no one liked it so well as to espouse it, that is, to inhabit there and to make it his constant residence. I have been vexed to see husbands hate their wives, only because they do them wrong. We should not at any rate, methinks, love them the less for our faults; they should, at least upon the account of repentance and compassion, be dearer to us.

Difference betwixt marriage and love.

They are different ends, and yet, says he, in some sort compatible. Marriage has utility, justice, honour, and constancy for its share; a dull, but more universal pleasure. Love founds itself wholly upon pleasure, and indeed has it more full, lively, and stinging; a pleasure inflamed by difficulty; there must be in it sting and ardour; 'tis no more love if without darts and fire. The bounty of ladies is too profuse in marriage, and dulls the point of affection and desire; to evade which inconvenience do but observe what pains Lycurgus and Plato take in their laws.

Laws imposed by the men upon the women, before the latter gave their consent to them.

Women are not to blame at all when they refuse the rules of life that are introduced into the world; forasmuch as the men made them without their consent. There is naturally dispute and quarrelling betwixt them and us; and the strictest

[1] Ælian, *Var. Hist.* xii. 52

friendship we have with them is yet mixed with tumult and tempest. In the opinion of our author, we deal inconsiderately with them in this; after we have discovered that they are without comparison more able and ardent in the effects of love than we, and that the old priest has testified as much, who had been one while a man and then a woman,

> Venus huic erat utraque nota:[1]
>
> "For he the pleasure of each sex had tried;"

and, moreover, that we have learnt from their own mouths the proof that in different ages was made by an emperor and empress of Rome, both famous for ability in that affair; for he[2] in one night deflowered ten Sarmatian virgins that were his captives; but she[3] had five-and-twenty bouts in one night, changing her man according to her need and liking,—

> Adhuc ardens rigidæ tentigine vulvæ,
> Et lassata viris, nondum satiata, recessit;[4]
>
> "Still raging with the fever of desire,
> Her veins all turgid, and her blood all fire,
> Exhausted, but unsatisfied, she sought
> Her home;"

and that, upon the dispute which happened in Catalonia, wherein a wife complaining of her husband's too frequent addresses to her, not so much, as I conceive, that she was incommoded by it (for I believe no miracles out of religion), as under this pretence to curtail and curb in this, which is the fundamental act of marriage, the authority of husbands over their wives, and to show that their frowardness and malignity go beyond the nuptial bed, and spurn under foot even the graces and sweets of Venus; the husband, a man really brutish and unnatural, replied, that even on fasting days he could not subsist with less than ten courses. Whereupon came out that notable sentence of the Queen of Arragon, by which, after mature deliberation of her council, this good queen, to

1 *Tiresias.* Ovid, *Metam.* iii. 323.
2 *Proculus.* Flav. Vopiscus, *in Vita.*
3 *Messalina*, wife of the Emperor Claudius.
4 Juvenal, vi. 128

give a rule and example to all succeeding ages of the moderation required in a just marriage, set down six times a day as a legitimate and necessary stint: surrendering and quitting a great deal of the needs and desires of her sex, that she might, she said, establish an easy, and consequently a permanent and immutable, method:[1] whereupon doctors cry out, "What the devil must the female appetite and concupiscence be, when their reason, their reformation, and virtue, is fixed at such a rate?" considering the diverse judgment of our appetites; for Solon, patron of the law schools, taxes us but at three bouts a month,[2] that men may not fail in point of conjugal frequentation. After having, I say, believed and preached all this,[3] we go and enjoin them continency for their particular share, and upon the extremest penalties.

Men give themselves aloose to the passion of love, and severely forbid it, at the same time, to the women.

There is no passion so hard to contend with as this, which we will have them only to resist, not simply as a vice alone, but as an execrable abomination, worse than irreligion or parricide; whilst we, at the same time, give way to't without offence or reproach. Even those women amongst us who have tried it, have sufficiently confessed what difficulty, or rather impossibility, they have found therein, even though seeking by material remedies to subdue, weaken, and oppose the body. We, on the contrary, would have them in full health, vigorous, in good keeping, high fed, and chaste together; that is to say, both hot and cold; for the marriage which we say is to keep them from burning is but a small refreshment to them, as we order the matter. If they take one whose vigorous age is hot and boiling, he will be proud that other women should know it:—

> Sit tandem pudor; aut eamus in jus:
> Multis mentula millibus redempta,
> Non est hæc tua, Basse; vendidisti;[4]

[1] Boerius (Nicholas Bohier), *Decisiones in Senatu Burdegalensi, discuss. ac promulgatæ; Decis.* 317, page 563, edit. of Lyons, 1579.

[2] Plutarch, *on Love.*

[3] *That women are more apt for love than men.*

[4] Martial, xii. 90, 10

"Bassus, for shame! at length give o'er,
Or I to justice must my cause resign;
What I demand is yours no more:
I bought it, and assert it mine."

Polemon the philosopher was justly sued by his wife for sowing in a barren field the seed that was due to one that was fruitful.[1] If, on the other hand, they take an old, decayed fellow, they are in a worse condition in marriage than either maids or widows. We think them well provided for, because they have a man to lie withal, as the Romans concluded Clodia Læta, a vestal, violated, because Caligula had approached her, though it was affirmed he did no more than approach her;[2] but, on the contrary, we by that increase their necessity, forasmuch as the touching and company of any man whatever rouses their desires, that in solitude would be more quiet; and, to the end, it is likely, that they might render their chastity more meritorious by this circumstance and consideration, Boleslaus and Kinge his wife, King and Queen of Poland, vowed it by mutual consent, being in bed together on their very wedding-day, and kept their vow in spite of all matrimonial conveniences and delights.[3]

The whole education of women tends to inspire them with a passion for love.

We train them up from their infancy to the traffic of love; their grace, their dress, knowledge, language, and whole instruction tend that way; their governesses imprint nothing in them but the idea of love, if for nothing else but by continually representing it to them, to make them disgusted with it. My daughter, the only child I have, is now at an age that forward young women are allowed to be married at; she is of a slow, delicate and tender complexion, and has accordingly been brought up by her mother after a private and particular manner, so that she but now begins to be weaned from her childish simplicity. She was one day reading before me in a French book, where she happened to meet the word "fou-

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, iii. 17.
[2] And accordingly buried her alive. Xiphilen, *Life of Caligula*.
[3] Cromer, *de Rebus Pol.* viii.

teau," the name of a tree very well known;[1] the woman to whose conduct she is committed, stopped her short a little rudely, and made her skip over that dangerous step. I let her alone, not to trouble their rules, for I never concern myself in that sort of government; the feminine polity has a mysterious course, we must leave it to them; but if I am not mistaken, the commerce of twenty lacquies could not, in six months' time, have so imprinted in her fancy the meaning, usage, and all the consequence of the sound of those smutty syllables, as this good old woman did by reprimand and interdiction.

> Motus doceri gaudet Ionicos
> Matura virgo, et frangitur artubus
> Jam nunc, et incestos amores
> De tenero meditatur ungui:[2]

> "With pliant limbs the ripen'd maid
> Now joys to learn the wanton tread
> Of dance Ionic, and to prove
> The pleasures of forbidden love."

Let them but give themselves the rein a little, let them but enter into liberty of discourse; we are but children to them in this science; hear them but represent our pursuits and discourses; they will perfectly make you understand that we bring them nothing they have not known before, and digested without our help. It is, perhaps, as Plato says, that they have formerly been debauched by men.[3] I happened one day to be in a place where I could hear some of their talk without their suspicion; I am sorry that I cannot repeat it. "By our lady," said I, "it is time for us to go study the phrases of Amadis, Boccaccio, and Aretin, to be able to discourse with them; we employ our time to much purpose indeed! there is neither word, example, nor step, they are not more perfect in than our books; 'tis a discipline that springs with their blood,—

[1] The beech. The sound of the word resembles that of an obscene term.

[2] Horace, *Od.* iii. 6. 21. The text has *fingitur arbutus.*

[3] Alluding to the transmigration of souls.

Et mentem Venus ipsa dedit,[1]

"Venus herself has made them what they are,"

and which those good instructors, nature, youth, and health, are continually inspiring them with; they need not learn, they breed it:—

Nec tantum niveo gavisa est ulla columbo
Compar, vel si quid dicitur improbius,
Oscula mordenti semper decerpere rostro,
Quantum præcipue multivola est mulier.[2]

"Not more delighted is the milk-white dove,
(Or if there be a thing more prone to love,)
Still to be billing with her mate, than is
Woman, with every man she meets to kiss."

So that if the natural violence of their desire were not a little restrained by fear and honour, which have been wisely contrived for them, we should be all shamed. All the motions in the world tend to this conjunction; 'tis a matter infused throughout; 'tis a centre to which all things tend. We yet see the edicts of wise old Rome, made for the service of love, and the precepts of Socrates for the instruction of courtezans:—

Nec non libelli stoici inter sericos
Jacere pulvillos amant:[3]

"And stoical books for all their gravity,
Amongst silk cushions love to lie:"

Zeno, amongst his laws, did also regulate the divarications and motions in getting a maidenhead. Of what sense was the philosopher Strato's book, "Of Carnal Conjunction?" And what did Theophrastus treat of, in those he entitled, the one, "The Lover," and the other "Of Love?" of what Aristippus, in his, "Of Ancient Delights?" what do the so long and lively descriptions of Plato of the bolder loves in his time pretend to? and the book called "The Lover," of De-

[1] Virgil, *Georgic.* iii. 267.
[2] Catullus, *Carm* lxvi. 125.
[3] Horace, *Epod.* viii. 15.

metrius Phalerius? and "Clinias, or Enforced Love," by Heraclides Ponticus; and Antisthenes' "Of Getting Children, or Of Weddings," and the other, "Of the Master, or the Lover?" and that of Aristo, "Of Amorous Exercises?" what those of Cleanthes, one "Of Love," the other, "Of the Art of Loving?" The amorous dialogues of Sphœreus? and the fable of Jupiter and Juno, of Chrysippus, impudent beyond all toleration? And his fifty so lascivious epistles? I will let alone the writings of the philosophers of the Epicurean sect, protectress of pleasure. Fifty deities were, in time past, assigned to this office;[1] and there has been a nation where, to assuage the lust of those that came to their devotion, they had purposely male and female strumpets in their temples for them to lie with; and it was an act of ceremony to use them before they went to prayers:[2] *Nimirum propter continentiam incontinentia necessaria est; incendium ignibus extinguitur.* "Doubtless incontinency is necessary for continency's sake; a conflagration is extinguished by fire."

Whores kept in temples for the use of those who came to their devotion.

In the greatest part of the world that member of our body was deified; in one and the same province some flayed off the skin to offer and consecrate a piece, others offered and consecrated their seed. In another, the young men publicly cut through betwixt the skin and the flesh of that part in several places, and thrust pieces of wood into the apertures as long and thick as they would receive, and of those pieces of wood afterwards made a fire for an offering to their gods; and were esteemed neither very vigorous nor chaste, if, by the force of that intolerable pain, they seemed to be any thing dismayed. In other countries the most sacred magistrate was reverenced and acknowledged by that member; and in several ceremonies the effigy of it was carried in pomp, in honour of several divinities. The Egyptian ladies, in their

[1] *Of getting a maidenhead.* In the edition of 1588, this sentence immediately follows that which is now some lines before it, respecting Zeno.

[2] At Babylon (see Herod. i. 199, Strabo, xvi. &c.), and at Heliopolis, in Phœnicia, (see Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, iii. 58. Val. Max. ii. 6, 15, &c.)

Bacchanalia, each carried one carved of wood about their necks, exactly made, as great and heavy as each was able to bear; besides one which the statue of their god represented, which in greatness surpassed all the rest of his body.[1] The married women near to the place where I live, make of their kerchiefs the figure of one upon their foreheads, to glorify themselves in the enjoyment they have of it; and, coming to be widows, they throw it behind, and cover it with their head-cloths. The most modest matrons of Rome thought it an honour to offer flowers and garlands to the god Priapus; and they made the virgins, at the time of their espousals, sit upon his shameful parts.[2] I know not whether I have not in my time seen some air of like devotion. What was the meaning of that ridiculous thing our forefathers wore before on their breeches, and that is still worn by the Swiss? To what end do we make a formal show of our implements under our gaskins, and often, which is worse, above their natural size, by cheating and imposture? I have half a mind to believe that this sort of vestment was invented in the better and more conscientious ages, that the world might not be deceived; and that every one should give public account of his dimensions; the simpler nations wear them yet, and near about the real size. In those days the tailor took its measure, as is done now of a leg or a foot. That good man who, when I was young, gelt so many noble and antique statues in his great city that they might not corrupt the sight, according to the advice of this other good ancient:—

> Flagitii principium est, nudare inter cives corpora:[3]
>
> "'Tis the beginning of wickedness to show nudities in public:"

should have called to mind that, as in the mysteries of the goddesses, all masculine appearance was excluded, that he

1 Herod. ii. 48, who, however, has it, Αἰδοῖον ὂν πολλῷ τέω ἔλασσον ἐὸν τοῦ ἄλλω σωματος, "a member which is *not much less* than the rest of the body."

2 Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* i. 20. St. Augustin, *de Civit. Dei.* vi. 9.

3 Ennius, *apud* Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 33.

did nothing if he did not geld horses and asses, and finally all nature too :—

> Omne adeo genus in terris, hominumque, ferarumque,
> Et genus æquoreum, pecudes, pictæque volucres,
> In furias ignemque ruunt.[1]

> "All creatures to this passion are inclin'd;
> For whether they be those of human kind,
> Beasts, wild or tame, fish, or the feather'd choir,
> They're all inflamed with wanton love's desire."

The gods, says Plato,[2] have given us one disobedient and unruly member, that, like a furious animal, attempts by the violence of its appetite to subject all things to it; and they have given women one that has the same qualities, like a greedy and ravenous animal, which, if one refuse to give him food in season, grows wild, impatient of delay, and infusing the rage into their bodies, stops the passages, and hinders respiration, causing a thousand inconveniences; till having imbibed the fruit of the common thirst, it has plentifully besprinkled and bedewed the bottom of their womb.

Now my legislator[3] should also have considered, that perhaps it would have been a chaster and more useful custom to let them know the reality betimes, than permit them to guess according to the liberty and heat of their own fancy; instead of real parts, they substitute, through hope and desire, others that are three times greater; and a certain friend of mine lost himself by letting his be seen in a place not fit to apply them to their more serious use. What mischief do not those representations of prodigious size do, that the boys scrawl upon the staircases and walls, which give them a strange contempt of our natural furniture. And what do we know but that Plato, after other well-instituted republics, ordered that the men and women, old and young, should expose themselves naked to the view of one another, in his Gymnastics, upon that very account? The Indian women, who see the men stark naked, have at least cooled the sense of seeing;

[1] Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 242.
[2] *Timæus*, towards the end.
[3] *The Pope*, "the good man" above referred to.

and let the women of the kingdom of Pegu say what they will, who below the waist have nothing to cover them but a cloth slip before, so narrow, that what decency and modesty soever they pretend by it, at every step all is to be seen, that it is an invention to allure the men to them, and to divert them from the boys, to whom that nation is universally inclined; yet perhaps they lose more by it than they get; and a man may say that an entire appetite is much sharper than one already glutted by the eyes; Livia used to say that to a virtuous woman a naked man was but a statue.[1] The Lacedemonian women, more virgins when wives than our daughters are, saw every day the young men of the city stripped naked in their exercises, little minding themselves to cover their thighs in walking, believing themselves, says Plato,[2] sufficiently covered with their virtue, without any other robe. But those of whom St. Austin speaks,[3] have given nudity a wonderful power of temptation, that have made it a doubt whether women, at the day of judgment, shall rise again in their own sex, and not rather in ours, for fear of tempting us again, though in that holy place. In brief, we allure and flesh them by all sorts of ways; we incessantly heat and stir up their imagination, and yet we find fault. Let us confess the truth; there is scarce one of us that does not more apprehend the shame that accrues to him by the vices of his wife than by his own, and that is not more solicitous (wonderful charity!) of the conscience of his wife than of his own; who had not rather commit theft and sacrilege, and that his wife was a murderess and an heretic, than that she should not be more chaste than her husband. An unjust estimate of vices! Both we and they are capable of a thousand corruptions more prejudicial and unnatural than lust; but we weigh vices, not according to nature, but according to our interest, by which means they take so many unequal forms.

The austerity of our decrees renders the propensity of

1 Dion, *Life of Tiberius.*
3 *De Civit. Dei*, xxii. 17.

2 *Republic*, v. Plato says this of women in general, without referring especially to the Lacedemonians.

women to this vice more violent and vicious than its condition tends to, and engages it in consequences worse than the cause; they will voluntarily offer to go to the Exchange to seek for gain, and to the war to get reputation, rather than, in the midst of ease and delights, to have to do with so difficult a guardship; do not they very well see that there is neither merchant nor soldier who will not leave his business to run after this other, and so much as the porter and cobbler, toiled and tired out as they are with labour and hunger?

> Num tu, quæ tenuit dives Achæmenes,
> Aut pinguis Phrygiæ Mygdonias opes,
> Permutare velis crine Licymniæ,
> Plenas aut Arabum domos,
> Dum fragrantia detorquet ad oscula
> Cervicem, aut facili sævitia negat,
> Quæ poscente magis gaudeat eripi,
> Interdum rapere occupet?[1]

> "Say, shall the wealth by kings possest,
> Or the rich diadems they wear,
> Or all the treasures of the East,
> Purchase one lock of my Lycymnia's hair?
> While now her bending neck she plies,
> Backward to meet the fragrant kiss,
> Then with an easy cruelty denies,
> Yet wishes you would snatch, not ask, the bliss."

Chastity in a woman hard to be kept.

I can hardly tell whether the exploits of Alexander and Cæsar do really surpass the resolution of a beautiful young woman, bred up after our fashion in the light and commerce of the world, assaulted by so many contrary examples, and yet keeping herself entire in the midst of a thousand continual and powerful solicitations. There is no doing more difficult or more thorny, than that not-doing; I find it more easy to keep a suit of armour on, all the days of one's life, than a maidenhead; and the vow of virginity, of all others, is the most noble, as being the hardest to keep: *Diaboli virtus in lumbis est*,[2] says St. Jerome.

[1] Horace, *Ode*, ii. 12, 21.

[2] St. Jerome, *Contra Jovin.* ii. t. ii. p. 72, ed. of Basel, 1537.

We have doubtless resigned to the ladies the most difficult and most vigorous of all human endeavours, and let us resign to them the glory too. This ought singularly to encourage them to be obstinate in it; 'tis a brave thing for them to defy us, and to spurn under foot that vain preëminence of valour and virtue that we pretend to have over them; they will find, if they do but observe it, that they will not only be much more esteemed for it, but also much more beloved. A gallant man does not give over his pursuit for being refused; provided it be a refusal of chastity, and not of choice; we may swear, threaten, and complain as much as we please; we lie, we love them all the better; there is no allurement like modesty, if it be not rude and uncivil. 'Tis stupidity and meanness to hold on against hatred and disdain; but, against a virtuous and constant resolution, mixed with some kindness and acknowledgment, 'tis the exercise of a noble and generous soul. They may recognize our services to a certain degree, and give us civilly to understand that they disdain us not; for that law that enjoins them to abominate us because we adore them, and to hate us because we love them, is certainly very severe, were it but for the difficulty of it; why should they not give ear to our offers and requests, so long as they keep within the bounds of modesty? Wherefore should we fancy them to have other thoughts within, and to be worse than they seem? A queen of our time acutely said, that to refuse these courtships is a testimony of weakness in women, and a self-accusation of facility; and that a lady could not boast of her chastity who was never tempted. The limits of honour are not cut so fine; they may give themselves a little rein, and dispense a little without forfeiting themselves; there lies before the frontier some space free, indifferent and neuter. He that has beaten and pursued her into her fort is a strange fellow, if he be not satisfied with his fortune; the value of the conquest is to be estimated by the difficulty. Would you know what impression your service

What ought to be an encouragement to women to take great care of it.

and merit have made in her heart? Judge of it by her behaviour. Some may grant more, who do not grant so much. The obligation of a benefit wholly relates to the good-will of those who confer it; the other coincident circumstances are dumb, dead, and casual; it costs her more to grant you that little, than it would do her companion to grant all. If in any thing rarity gives a value, it ought especially in this. Do not consider how little it is that is given, but how few have it to give; the value of money alters according to the coin and stamp of the place.

Whatever the spite and indiscretion of some may make them say upon the excess of their discontent, yet virtue and truth will in time recover all; I have known some, whose reputation has for a great while suffered under slander, who have after been restored to the world's universal opinion, merely by their constancy, without care or artifice; every one repents, and gives himself the lie for what he has believed and said; and from maids, a little suspected, they have been afterwards advanced to the first rank amongst ladies of honour. Somebody told Plato that all the world spoke ill of him: "Let them talk," said he,[1] "I will live so as to make them change their note." Besides the fear of God, and the value of so rare a glory, which ought to make them look to themselves, the corruption of the age we live in compels them to it; and if I were as they, there is nothing I would not rather do than entrust my reputation in so dangerous hands. In my time, the pleasure of telling (a pleasure little inferior to that of doing), was not permitted, but to those who had some faithful and only friend; but now the ordinary discourse and common table-talk is nothing but boasts of favours received, and the secret liberality of ladies. In earnest, 'tis too abject, and too much meanness of spirit, to suffer such ungrateful, indiscreet, and giddy-headed people so to persecute, tease, and rifle those tender and obliging favours.

This our immoderate and illegitimate exasperation against

[1] Apud Antonius et Maximus, *Serm.* 54.

this vice, springs from the most vain and turbulent disease that afflicts human minds, which is jealousy.

The unreasonableness of jealousy.

Quis vetat apposito lumen de lumine sumi?
Dent licet assidue, nil tamen inde perit.[1]

"That light from light be taken, who'll deny?
Tho' they do nought but give, nought's lost thereby."

She, and Envy her sister, seem to me to be the most idle and foolish of the whole troop. As to the last, I can say little to it; 'tis a passion that, though said to be so mighty and powerful, had never to do with me. As to the other, I know it by sight, and that's all. Beasts feel it; the shepherd Cratis being fallen in love with a she-goat, the he out of jealousy came to butt him as he was laid asleep, and beat out his brains.[2] We have raised this fever to a greater excess by the examples of some barbarous nations; the best disciplined have been touched with it, and 'tis reason, but not transported:—

Ense maritali nemo confossus adulter
Purpureo Stygias sanguine tinxit aquas;

"Ne'er did adulterer, by the husband slain,
With purple blood the Stygian waters stain;"

Lucullus, Cæsar, Pompey, Antony, Cato, and other brave men, were cuckolds and knew it, without making any bustle about it; there was in those days but one coxcomb, Lepidus,[3] that died for grief that his wife had used him so.

The wisest of men and nations have been the least touched with this passion.

Ah! tum te miserum malique fati,
Quem attractis pedibus, patente porta,
Percurrent raphanique mugilesque;[4]

[1] The sense of the last verse is in Ovid's *Arte Amandi*, iii. 93. Montaigne has taken the words from an epigram, entitled "Priapus," which begins thus:—

"Obscure poteram tibi dicere; da mihi, quod tu . . . .
Des licet assidue, nil tamen inde perit."

[2] Ælian, *Treatise of Animals*, xii. 42.

[3] "The father of one of the triumvirs, who died," says Plutarch, "having broken his heart, not so much by the distress of his affairs as by a discovery he made from a letter which fell into his hands, that his wife had forfeited her honour."—*Life of Pompey*, c. 5.

[4] Catull. *Carm.* xv. 17.

"Wretched will then be thy malignant fate,
When by the heels they drag thee from the gate,
Thro' show'rs of rotten roots and stinking skate;"

and the god of our poet, when he surprised one of his companions with his wife, satisfied himself with putting them to shame only,—

Atque aliquis de diis non tristibus optat
Sic fieri turpis;[1]

"Yet for the pleasure all had borne the shame;"

and took fire at the languid embraces she afterwards gave him, complaining that, upon that account, she was grown jealous of his affection;—

Quid causas petis ex alto? fiducia cessit
Quo tibi, diva, mei?[2]

"Why are, my goddess, all these reasons tried,
Say why in me no longer you confide?"

nay, she asks him a favour for a bastard of hers,—

Arma rogo genitrix, nato,[3]

"The mother for her son doth armour crave;"

which is freely granted; and Vulcan speaks honourably of Æneas,—

Arma acri facienda viro,[4]

"Arms for a valiant hero shall be made,"

with, in truth, a more than common humanity; and I am willing to leave this excess of bounty to the gods:—

Nec divis homines componere æquum est;[5]

"Nor is it fit to equal men with gods."

As to the confusion of children, besides that the gravest legislators ordain and affect it in their republics, it touches not the women, where this passion is, I know not how much more strongly seated:—

[1] Ovid, *Metam.* iv. 187, taken from the *Odyssey*, viii. 339.
[2] *Æneid*, viii. 395.
[3] Id. *ib.* 383.
[4] Id. *ib.* 441.
[5] Catull. *Carm.* lxviii. 141.

Sæpe etiam Juno, maxima cœlicolum,
Conjugis in culpa flagravit quotidiana;[1]

"And Juno with fierce jealousy inflam'd,
Her husband's daily slips has often blam'd."

When jealousy seizes these poor, weak, and resistless souls, 'tis pity to see how miserably it torments and tyrannizes over them; it insinuates itself into them, under the title of amity; but after it has once possessed them, the same causes that served for a foundation of good-will serve them for a foundation of mortal hatred. 'Tis of all the diseases of the mind that which most things serve for aliment, and fewest for remedy; the virtue, health, merit, and reputation of the husband are the incendiaries of their fury and ill-will:—

Nullæ sunt inimicitiæ, nisi amoris acerbæ;[2]

"No enmities so keen as those of love."

This fever defaces and corrupts all they have of beautiful and good besides; and there is no action of a jealous woman, let her be how chaste and how good a housewife soever, that does not relish of anger and rudeness; 'tis a furious agitation, that rebounds them to an extremity quite contrary to its cause. Which was very manifest in one Octavius,[3] at Rome, who, having lain with Porcia Postumia, found his love so much augmented by fruition, that he solicited with all importunity to marry her; which, seeing he could not persuade her to, this excessive affection precipitated him into the effects of the most cruel and mortal hatred, and he killed her. In like manner, the ordinary symptoms of this other amorous disease are intestine hatreds, factions, conspiracies,—

Notumque furens quid fœmina possit,[4]

"'Tis known what woman in her rage can do,"

and a rage which so much the more frets itself, as it is compelled to veil itself under a pretence of good-will.

[1] Catull. *Carm.* v. 138.
[2] Propert. ii. 8, 3.
[3] *Octavius Sagitta.* Tacitus, *Annal.* xiii. 44.
[4] *Æneid*, v. 21.

Now the duty of chastity is of a vast extent. Is it their wills that we would have them restrain? That is a very pliant and active thing; a thing very quick and nimble to be staid. How, if dreams sometimes engage them so far that they cannot deny them. It is not in them, nor perhaps in chastity itself, seeing it is female, to defend itself from lust and desire. If we are only interested in their will, what a case are we in then? Do but imagine what crowding there would be amongst men in pursuance of this privilege, to run full speed, without tongue and eyes, into every woman's arms that would accept them; the Scythian women put out the eyes of all their slaves and prisoners of war, that they might have their pleasure of them, and they never the wiser.[1] Oh, the furious advantage of opportunity! Should any one ask me what was the first part of love, I should answer, that it is how to take a man's time; and so the second, and so the third; 'tis a point that can do every thing. I have sometimes wanted fortune, but I have also sometimes been wanting to myself in matter of attempt. There is greater temerity required in this age of ours, which our young people excuse under the name of warmth; but did women examine it more strictly, they would find that it rather proceeded from contempt. I was always superstitiously afraid of giving offence, and have ever had a great respect for her I loved; besides shame, he who in this traffic takes away the reverence defaces at the same time the lustre. I would in this affair have a man a little play the child, the timorous, and the servant. If not altogether in this, I have in other things, some air of the foolish bashfulness whereof Plutarch makes mention; and the course of my life has been divers ways hurt and blemished with it, a quality very ill suiting my universal form. And what is there also amongst us but

[1] Herodotus, lib. iv. 2, does not say that the Scythian women had the eyes of their slaves plucked out for the purpose assigned by Montaigne, but that the Scythians themselves deprived all their slaves of sight for the purpose of drawing milk from their mares, which was their food. But it does not appear very plain that there was a necessity of blinding these poor slaves for this work; and therefore the reason that Montaigne assigns for it is much more easy to comprehend.

sedition and discord? I am as much out of countenance to be denied, as I am to deny; and it so much troubles me to be troublesome to others, that in occasions where duty compels me to try the good-will of any one in a thing that is doubtful, and that will be chargeable to him, I do it very faintly, and very much against my will; but if it be for my own particular (whatever Homer truly says, that modesty is a foolish virtue in an indigent person [1]), I commonly commit it to a third person to blush for me, and deny those that employ me with the same difficulty; so that it has sometimes befallen me to have had a mind to deny when I had not the power to do it. 'Tis folly then to attempt to bridle in women a desire that is so powerful in them, and so natural to them; and when I hear them brag of having so maidenly and so temperate a will, I laugh at them; they retire too far back. If it be an old toothless trot, or a young dry consumptive thing, though it be not altogether to be believed, at least they may say it with more likelihood of truth; but they who are yet capable of love and desire say this to their own prejudice, by reason that inconsiderate excuses serve for accusation; like a gentleman, a neighbour of mine, suspected to be insufficient,

> Languidior tenera cui pendens sicula beta;
> Nunquam se mediam sustulit ad tunicam; [2]

> "Unfit for love's sweet toil,"

who, three or four days after he was married, to justify himself, swore that he had ridden twenty stages the night before; an oath that was afterwards made use of to convict him of his ignorance in that affair and to unmarry him. Besides, it signifies nothing; for there is neither continency nor virtue where there are no opposing desires. "I feel it," they may say, "but I will not yield to it." Saints themselves speak after that manner. I mean those who boast in good earnest of their coldness and insensibility, and who expect to be believed when they profess it with a grave and serious counte-

1 *Odyssey*, xvii. 347.

2 Catullus, *Carm.* lxvii. 21.

nance; for when it is spoken with an affected look, where their eyes give the lie to their tongue, and speak in the cant of their profession, which goes always against the hair, 'tis good sport. I am a great friend of liberty and plainness; but there is no medium; if it be not wholly simple and child-like, 'tis silly and unbecoming ladies in this commerce, and presently runs into impudence. Their disguises and figures only serve to cozen fools. Lying is there in its seat of honour; 'tis a by-way, that by a backdoor leads to truth. If we cannot curb their imagination, what would we have them do? Do indeed! there are enough who evade all foreign communication, by which chastity may be corrupted:—

> Illud sæpe facit, quod sine teste facit:[1]
>
> "He often does himself apply
> To that he does when none is by:"

and those whom we fear the least are perhaps most to be feared; their sins that made the least noise are the worst:—

> Offendor mœcha simpliciore minus;[2]
>
> "A profess'd strumpet less offence does give."

There are ways by which they may lose their virginity without prostitution, and, which is more, without their knowledge: *Obstetrix, virginis cujusdam integritatem manu velut explorans, sive malevolentiâ, sive inscitiâ, sive casu, dum inspicit, perdidit:*[3] some one by seeking her maidenhead has lost it; another by playing with it has destroyed it. We cannot precisely define the actions we interdict them; they must guess at our meaning under general and doubtful terms; the very idea we invent for their chastity is ridiculous; for amongst the greatest examples I hear of, Fatua, the wife of Faunus, is one, who never after her marriage suffered herself to be seen by any man whatever;[4] and the wife of Hiero, who never noticed her

The extreme chastity of some women.

[1] Martial, vii. 62, 6.
[2] Id. vi. 7, 6.
[3] These words are a confirmation of what Montaigne has been saying, and though they are to be met with in St. Austin's treatise, *De Civitate Dei*, i. 18, they are too gross to be translated.
[4] Varro, *apud* Lactantius, i. 22.

husband's bad breath, imagining that it was common to all men.[1] They must needs become insensible and invisible to satisfy us.

Chastity depends on the innocence of the will.

Now let us confess that the knot of the judgment of this duty principally lies in the will; there have been husbands who have suffered this mishap, not only without reproaching or taking offence at their wives, but with singular obligation to them, and great commendation of their virtue. Such a woman has been, who prized her honour above her life, and yet has prostituted it to the furious lust of a mortal enemy to save her husband's life, and who, in so doing, did that for him she would not have done for herself![2] It is not here that we are to produce these examples; they are too high and rich to be set off with so poor a foil as I can give them here; let us reserve them for a nobler place; but for examples of the ordinary sort, do we not every day see women amongst us, that surrender themselves for their husband's only benefit, and by their express order and mediation? And, of old, Phaulius the Argive offered his to King Philip out of ambition,[3] as Galba did out of civility, who, having entertained Mæcenas at supper, and observing that his wife and he began to cast sheep's eyes at one another, and to complot love by signs, let himself sink down upon his cushion, like one in a profound sleep, to give opportunity to their fondling; which he himself handsomely confessed; for at the same time a servant making bold to filch a vase that stood upon the table, he frankly cried, "Hold, you rogue! Do you not see that I only sleep for Mæcenas?"[4] Such a one there may be, whose manners may be lewd enough, and yet whose will may be more staid than another, who outwardly carries himself after a more regular manner. As we see some who complain of having vowed chastity before they knew what they did; and I have also

Women prostituted by the mediation of their husbands, and for their advantage.

[1] Plutarch, *Apoth. of the Ancient Kings.*
[2] Bayle, *Dict.* art. *Acindynus.*
[3] Plutarch, *on Love.*
[4] Id. *ib.*

known others really complain of being given up to debauchery before they were at years of discretion; the vice of the parents, or the impulse of necessity, which is a rude counsellor, may be the cause. In the East Indies, though chastity is of singular reputation, yet custom permitted a married woman to prostitute herself to any one who presented her with an elephant, and that with glory too, to have been valued at so high a rate.[1] Phedo the philosopher, a man of birth, after the taking of his country, Elis, made it his trade[2] to prostitute the beauty of his youth for money, so long as it lasted, to any one that would, thereby to gain his living. And Solon was the first in Greece, 'tis said, who by his laws gave liberty to women, at the expense of their chastity, to provide for the necessities of life; a custom that Herodotus says had been received in many governments before his time.[3] And besides, what fruit is there of this painful solicitude? For what justice soever there is in this passion, we are yet to consider whether it turns to account or no: does any one think to curb it by his industry?

> Pone seram; cohibe; sed quis custodiet ipsos
> Custodes? cauta est, et ab illis incipit uxor;[4]

> "I hear, old friends, I hear you; make all sure,
> Plant spies within, and bolts without the door;
> But who shall keep the keepers? wives contemn
> Our poor precautions, and begin with them."

What conveniency will not serve their turn in so knowing an age?

Curiosity in the article of women's chastity pernicious.

Curiosity is vicious throughout; but 'tis pernicious here; 'tis folly to examine into a disease for which there is no physic that does not inflame and make it worse; of which the shame grows still greater and more public by jealousy, and of which the revenge more wounds our children than heals us. You wither

[1] Arrian, *Hist. Indic.* c. 17.

[2] He did not make a trade of himself, voluntarily; but being a slave, his master compelled him to do so. Laertius, *in Vitâ.* Aulus Gellius, ii. 18.

[3] Herodotus attributes it also to the Lydians (i. 94), and to the Babylonians (i. 96).

[4] Juvenal, vi. 346.

and die in the search of so obscure a proof. How miserably have they of my time arrived at that knowledge, who have been so unhappy as to find it out? If the informer does not at the same time present a remedy, and bring relief, 'tis an injurious information, and that better deserves a dagger-stab than does the lie given. We no less laugh at him who takes pains to prevent it, than at him who is a cuckold and knows it not. The character of cuckold is indelible; he who once has it carries it to his grave; the punishment proclaims it more than the fault. It is to much purpose to see, to draw the curtain, and to discover our private misfortunes, and to trumpet forth on tragic scaffolds misfortunes that only hurt us by being known; for "a good wife," or "a happy marriage," is said, not of those that really are so, but of those whereof no one says to the contrary. Men should be so discreet as to evade this tormenting and unprofitable knowledge; and the Romans had a custom, when returning from any expedition, to send home before to acquaint their wives with their coming, that they might not surprise them;[1] and to this purpose it is that a certain nation has introduced a custom, that the priest shall on the wedding day unlock the bride's cabinet, to free the husband from the doubt and curiosity of examining in the first assault whether she comes a virgin to his bed, or has been at the sport before.

A gentleman is not the less esteemed for being dishonoured by his wife.

But the world will be talking; I know an hundred honest men, cuckolds, that are handsomely and not very indecently so; a worthy man is pitied, but not disesteemed for it. Order it so that your virtue may stifle your misfortune; that good men may curse the occasion; and that he who wrongs you may tremble but to think on't. And, moreover, who escapes being talked of at the same rate, from the least to the greatest?

> Tot qui legionibus imperitavit,
> Et melior quam tu multis fuit, improbe, rebus;[2]

[1] Plutarch, *Roman Questions*, c. 9.
[2] Lucret. iii. 1041, 1039. Of the latter verse Montaigne gives the sense, but not the words.

"To whom so many legions once did bow,
And who, poor wretch, was better far than thou:"

you hear how many honest men are reproached with this in your presence, and you may believe that you are no more spared behind your back. Nay, the ladies will be laughing too; and what are they so apt to laugh at in this virtuous age of ours, as at a peaceable and well-composed marriage? There is not one amongst you but has made somebody a cuckold; and nature runs in parallel, in compensation, and turn for turn. The frequency of this mishap ought long since to have made it easy; 'tis now passed into custom.

Miserable passion, which has this aggravation also, that it is incommunicable:—

Fors etiam nostris invidit quæstibus aures;[1]

"And spiteful fortune too denies
To give an ear unto our cries;"

for to what friend dare you intrust your griefs; who, if he does not laugh at them, will not make use of the information to get a share of the quarry? The sours as well as the sweets of marriage are kept secret by the wife; and, amongst other troublesome conditions annexed to it, this, to a prating fellow, as I am, is one of the chief, that custom has rendered it indecent and prejudicial to communicate to any one all that a man knows and feels.

The jealousy of a wife is very fatal to her husband.

To give even women counsel against jealousy would be so much time lost; their very being is so made up of suspicion, vanity, and curiosity, that to cure them by any lawful way is not to be hoped or expected. They often recover of this infirmity by a form of health much more to be feared than the disease itself; for as there are enchantments that cannot take away the evil but by throwing it upon another, they also willingly transfer this fever to their husbands, when they shake it off themselves. And yet I know not, to speak truth, whether

[1] Catullus, *Carm.* lxvii. 170.

a man can suffer worse from them than their jealousy; 'tis the most dangerous of all their conditions, as the head is of all their members. Pittacus used to say, "That every one had his misfortune; and that his was the jealous head of his wife; but for which he should think himself perfectly happy."[1] It must indeed be a mighty inconvenience which could thus poison the whole life of so just, so wise, and valiant a man; what must we poor little fellows do? The senate of Marseilles had reason to grant him his request, that begged leave to kill himself, that he might be delivered from the clamour of his wife; for 'tis a mischief that is never removed but by carrying away the piece; and that has no remedy but flight or patience, both of them very hard. He was, to my mind, an understanding fellow that said there was no happy marriage but betwixt a blind wife and a deaf husband.

The dangerous consequences of too great a restraint laid on the wife by the husband.

Let us also consider whether the great and violent severity of obligation we enjoin them does not produce two effects contrary to our design; namely, whether it does not render the pursuers more eager to attack, and the women more easy to yield; for, as to the first, by raising the value of the place, we raise the value and desire of the conquest. Might it not be Venus herself who so cunningly enhanced the price of her merchandise, by making the laws her bawds; knowing how insipid a delight it would be that was not heightened by fancy, and hardness to achieve? In short, 'tis all pork, only varied by sauces, as said Flaminius's host.[2] Cupid is a roguish god, who makes it his sport to contend with religion and justice; 'tis his glory that his power makes all other powers and all other rules give place to his:—

Materiam culpæ prosequiturque suæ;[3]

"And seeks out matter for his crimes;"

And as to the second point, should we not be less cuckolds if

[1] Plutarch, *On Repose of Mind*, c. 11.
[2] Livy, xxxv. 49.
[3] Ovid, *Trist.* iv. i. 34.

we less feared to be so? according to the humour of women, whom interdiction incites, and who are more eager for being forbid:—

> Ubi velis, nolunt; ubi nolis, volunt ultro:[1]
>
> Concessa pudet ire via,[2]
>
> "In every varied choice, repugnant still,
> They wou'd, you won't, and when you won't they will."

What better interpretation can we make of Messalina's behaviour? She at first made her husband a cuckold in private, as is the common use; but, bringing her business about with too much ease, by reason of her husband's stupidity, she soon scorned that way, and presently fell to making open love to her own servants, and to favour and entertain them in the sight of all. She would make him know and see how she used him. This animal, not to be roused with all this, and rendering her pleasures dull and flat by his too stupid facility, by which he seemed to authorize and make them lawful, what does she but, being the wife of a living and healthful emperor, and at Rome, the theatre of the world, in the face of the sun, and with solemn ceremony, and to Silius, whom she had long before enjoyed, she publicly marries herself, one day that her husband was gone out of the city.[3] Does it not seem as if she was going to become chaste by her husband's negligence? or that she sought another husband that might sharpen her appetite by his jealousy, and who by watching should incite her? But the first difficulty she met with was also the last; the beast suddenly roused; these stupid sort of men are oft the most dangerous to deal with. I have seen by experience that this extreme toleration, when it comes to dissolve, produces the most severe revenge; for taking fire on a sudden, anger and fury being collected in one point, discharge their utmost force at the first charge,—

> Irarumque omnes effundit habenas;[4]
>
> "And poureth forth the whirlwind of his rage;"

[1] Terence, *Eunuch.* iv. 8, 43.
[2] Lucan, ii. 446.
[3] Tacitus, *Annal.* xi. 26, 27.
[4] *Æneid*, xii. 499.

he put her to death, and with her a great number of those with whom she had intelligence; even one man who could not help it, and whom she had caused to be forced to her bed with scourges.[1]

What Virgil says of Venus and Vulcan, Lucretius had better expressed of a stolen enjoyment betwixt her and Mars:—

> Belli fera mœnera Mavors
> Armipotens regit, in gremium qui sæpe tuum se
> Rejicit, æterno devinctus vulnere amoris;
> Pascit amore avidos inhians in te, Dea, visus,
> Eque tuo pendet resupini spiritus ore:
> Hunc tu, Diva, tuo recubantem corpore sancto
> Circumfusa super, suaves ex ore loquelas
> Funde.[2]

> "For furious Mars,
> The only governor and god of wars,
> With thee enamoured often doth resort
> To taste the pleasures of the Paphian court;
> There, on thy bosom, he supinely lies,
> Panting, and drinking love at both his eyes;
> Sucking thy balmy breath with eager kiss,
> And hastening to enjoy yet greater bliss;
> Then, while thy tender limbs about him move,
> Involv'd and fetter'd in the clasps of love,
> Thy charms in that transporting moment try,
> And softest language to his heart apply."

When I consider this *rejicit*, *pascit*, *inhians*, *molli*, *fovet*, *medullas*, *labefacta*, *pendet*, *percurrit*, and that noble *circumfusa*, mother of the gentle *infusus*, I contemn those little quibbles and verbal allusions that have been since in use. Those good people stood in need of no subtlety to disguise their meaning; their language is downright and plain, and full of natural and continued vigour; they are all epigram; not the sting only, but the head, body, and feet; there is nothing forced, nothing languishing; but they still keep the same pace: *Contextus totus virilis est; non sunt circa flosculos occupati.*[3] "The whole contexture is manly,

What constitutes true eloquence.

1 *Muester*, a comedian, and *Traulus Montanus*, a knight Tacitus, xi. 36.

2 Lucret. i. 33.

3 Seneca, *Epist.* 33

without introducing little flowers of rhetoric." 'Tis not a soft eloquence and without offence merely; 'tis nervous and solid, that does not so much please as it fills and ravishes the greatest minds. When I see these brave methods of expression, so lively, so profound, I do not say that 'tis well said, but well thought. 'Tis the sprightliness of the imagination that swells and elevates the words, *Pectus est quod disertum facit.*[1] "'Tis the heart makes it eloquent." Our people call judgment, language, and fine words, full conceptions. This representation is not so much carried on by dexterity of hand, as by having the object more vividly imprinted in the soul. Gallus speaks simply, because he conceives simply; Horace does not content himself with a superficial expression, that would betray him; he sees farther and more clearly into things; his wit breaks into and rumages all the magazine of words and figures wherewith to express himself, and he must have them above ordinary, because his conception is so. Plutarch says[2] that he sees the Latin tongue by the things; 'tis here the same; the sense illuminates and produces the words, not words of air, but of flesh and bone; they signify more than they express. Inferior heads perceive some image of this; for in Italy I said whatever I had a mind to do in common discourse; but in more serious subjects, I durst not have trusted myself with an idiom that I could not wind and turn out of its ordinary pace; I would therein have a power of introducing something of my own.

Men of wit enrich language, and give it fresh vigour.

The handling and utterance of fine wits is that which sets off a language; not so much by innovating it, as by putting it to more vigorous and various service, by straining, bending, and adapting; they do not create words, but they enrich their own, and give them weight and signification by the uses they put them

[1] Quintilian, x. 7.

[2] In the *Life of Demosthenes*, chap. 1. "I began to take Latin authors in hand," says he, "very late, being far advanced in the decline of life, when an odd thing happened to me, which is nevertheless true, viz: that I did not so much learn to understand things by the words, as I came to understand the words, in some degree, by the use and knowledge I had of the things thereby signified."

to, and teach them unwonted motions, but withal ingeniously and discreetly. And how little this talent is given to all, is manifest by the many French scribblers of this age; they are bold and proud enough not to follow the common road, but they lose their way for want of invention and discretion. There is nothing seen in their writings but a wretched affectation of a strange new style, with cold and absurd disguises, which, instead of elevating, depresses the matter; provided they can but trick up their style with fine new words, they care not what they signify; and to bring in a new word by the head and shoulders, they leave out the old one, very often more sinewy and significant than the other.

Montaigne's opinion of the French language.

There is stuff enough in our language, but there is a defect in fashioning it; for there is nothing that might not be made out of our terms of hunting and war, which is a fruitful soil to borrow from; and the forms of speaking, like herbs, improve and grow stronger by being transplanted. I find it sufficiently abounding, but not sufficiently pliable and vigorous; it quails under a powerful conception; if you would maintain the dignity of your style, you will oft perceive it to flag and languish under you, and there Latin steps in to its relief, as Greek does to other languages. Of some of the words I have picked out for my own use, we do not easily discern the energy, by reason that the frequent use of them has in some sort debased their beauty, and rendered it common; as in our ordinary language, there are several excellent phrases and metaphors to be met with, of which the beauty is withered by age, and the colour is sullied by too common handling; but that takes nothing from the relish to an understanding man; neither does it derogate from the glory of those ancient authors, who, 'tis likely, first brought those words into that lustre.

The sciences treat of things too finely, and after an artificial, very different from the common and natural way. My page makes love, and understands it; but read to him Leo the Hebrew,

The sciences treat of things with too much art.

and Ficinus,[1] where they speak of him, his thoughts and actions, he understands it not. I find in Aristotle most of my ordinary notions; they are there covered and disguised in another robe for the use of their schools. Well may they speed; but, were I of the trade, I would as much naturalize art as they artify nature. Let us leave Bembo and Equicola to themselves.[2] When I write, I can very well spare both the company and the remembrance of books, lest they should interrupt my method; and also, in truth, the best authors too much humble and discourage me. I am very much of the painter's mind, who, having represented cocks most wretchedly ill, charged all his boys not to suffer any real cock to come into his shop; and had rather need to give myself a little lustre after the manner of Antigenides the musician, who, when he had to perform, took care beforehand that the auditory should, either before or after, be disgusted with some other ill musicians. But I can hardly be without Plutarch; he is so universal and so full, that upon all occasions, and what extravagant subject soever you take in hand, he will still introduce himself into your business, and holds out to you a liberal and not to be exhausted hand of riches and embellishments. It vexes me that he is so exposed to the spoil of those who are conversant with him; I can no sooner cast an eye upon him but I purloin either a leg or a wing.

Why Montaigne chose to have no books by him but Plutarch while he was writing.

And also, for this design of mine, 'tis convenient for me to write at home, in a wild country, where I have nobody to assist or relieve me; where I hardly see a man that understands the Latin of his paternoster, and of French as little, if not less. I might have made it better elsewhere, but then the work would have

Why he chose to write at home, where he had none to help him.

[1] Leo of Judah, a Portuguese rabbi, who lived under Ferdinand the Catholic, and composed a "Dialogue on Love." Ficinus, who lived at the same period, translated the works of Plato and Plotinus, and wrote several metaphysical pieces.

[2] *Cardinal Bembo*, author of a poem called *Gli Asolani*. *Equicola*, a theologian and philosopher of the sixteenth century, wrote a book entitled *Della Natura d' Amore*.

been less my own; and its principal end and perfection is to be exactly mine. I should well enough correct an accidental error, of which I am full, as I run carelessly on; but for any ordinary and constant imperfections, it were a kind of treason to put them out. When another tells me, or I say to myself, "Thou art too full of figures; this is a word of the Gascon growth; this a dangerous phrase (I do not reject any of those that are used in the common streets of France, they that will fight custom with grammar are fools); this is an ignorant discourse; this is a paradoxical saying; this is a foolish expression; thou makest thyself merry sometimes; and men will think thou sayest a thing in good earnest, which thou only speakest in jest." Yes, say I; but I correct the faults of inadvertence, not those of custom. Do I not talk at the same rate throughout? Do I not represent myself to the life? Enough; I have done what I designed; all the world knows me in my book, and my book in me.

Montaigne very apt to imitate.

Now I have an apish imitating quality; when I used to write verses (and I never made any but Latin), they evidently accused the poet I had last read; and some of my first essays have a little exotic taste; I speak somewhat another kind of language at Paris than I do at Montaigne. Whomever I steadfastly look upon easily leaves some impression of his upon me; whatever I consider, I usurp; a foolish countenance, a disagreeable look, or a ridiculous way of speaking; vices most of all, because they seize and stick to me, and will not leave their hold without shaking off. I swear more by imitation than humour. A murdering imitation, like that of the apes, so terrible both in stature and strength, that Alexander met with in a certain country of the Indies, which he would have had much ado any other way to have subdued; but they afforded him the means, by that inclination of theirs, to imitate whatever they saw done. For the hunters, being directed to put on shoes in their sight, and to tie them fast with many knots, and to muffle up their heads in caps with running nooses, and to seem to anoint

their eyes with glue;[1] so did those silly creatures employ their imitations to their own ruin; they glued up their own eyes, haltered and bound themselves. The other faculty of playing the mimic, and ingeniously acting the words and gestures of another, purposely to make others merry, and to raise their admiration, is no more in me than in a stock. When I swear my own oath, 'tis only, by God, of all oaths the most direct. They say that Socrates swore by his dog; Zeno had for his oath the same interjection, at this time in use among the Italians, *cappari;*[2] Pythagoras swore by water and air.[3] I am so apt, without thinking of it, to receive these superficial impressions, that have I majesty or highness in my mouth for three days together, eight days after they come out instead of excellency and lordship; and what I say to-day in sport and fooling, I shall say seriously to-morrow. Wherefore, in writing, I more unwillingly undertake beaten arguments, lest I should handle them at another's expense. Every subject is equally fertile to me. A fly will serve me for a subject; and 'tis well if this I have in hand has not been undertaken at the recommendation of as flighty a will! I may begin with that which pleases me best, for matter is all linked to one another.

He generally produced his profoundest thoughts on a sudden.

But my soul displeases me, in that it ordinarily produces its deepest and most airy conceits, and those which please me best, when I least expect or study for them, and then suddenly vanish, I having, at that instant, nothing to apply them to; on horseback, at table, or in bed; but most on horseback, where I am most given to think. My speaking is somewhat nicely jealous of silence and attention; if I am talking forcibly, who interrupts, stops me. In travelling, the necessity of the way will often put a stop to discourse; besides that I, for the most

[1] Ælian, *de Animal*, xvii. 25, and Strabo, xv.

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*. *Cappari*, or *capparis*, is the name of a shrub bearing capers; others swore by a cabbage, as is the custom in France even at this day; witness the word *vertuchou*, a kind of oath which signifies the virtue of cabbage; an expression which many people make use of constantly.

[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.

part, travel without company fit to entertain long discourse, by which means I have all the leisure I would to entertain myself. It falls out as it does in my dreams; whilst dreaming I recommend them to my memory (for I am apt to dream that I dream), but the next morning I may represent to myself of what complexion they were, whether gay, or sad, or strange, but what they were, as to the rest, the more I endeavour to retrieve them, the deeper I plunge them into oblivion. So, of thoughts that come accidentally into my head, I have no more but a vain image remaining in my memory, only enough to make me torment myself in their quest to no purpose.

Definition of love.

Well then, laying books aside, and more simply and materially speaking, I find after all that love is nothing else but the thirst of enjoying the object desired; neither is Venus any other thing than the pleasure of discharging the vessels, like the pleasure nature gives us in discharging other parts; which either by immoderation or indiscretion becomes vicious. According to Socrates,[1] love is the appetite of generation, by the mediation of beauty. And having often considered the ridiculous titillation of this pleasure, the absurd, hairbrained, and senseless motions with which it inspires Zeno and Cratippus, the indiscreet rage, and the countenance inflamed with fury and cruelty in the sweetest effects of love, and then that grave, severe, and ecstatic air in so wanton an action; that our delights and our excrements are promiscuously shuffled together; and that the supreme pleasure carries along with it fainting and complaining, as well as grief; I believe it to be true, that, as Plato says,[2] the gods made man for their sport,—

> Quænam ista jocandi
> Sævitia?[3]

"What a strange sporting cruelty is this?"

and that it is in mockery that nature has ordered the most

[1] Plato, *Banquet*. [2] *Laws*, i. 13. [3] Claudian, *in Eutrop.* i. 4

troublesome of actions to be the most common, by that to make us equal, and to parallel fools and wise men, beasts and us. Even the most contemplative and sedate man, when I imagine him in this posture, I hold him an impudent fellow to pretend to be sedate and contemplative; 'tis the peacock's feet abating his pride.

> Ridentem dicere verum
> Quid vetat?[1]
>
> "Why may not truth in laughing guise be drest?"

They who banish serious imaginations from their sports, do, says one, like him who dares not adore the statue of a saint, if not covered with a veil. We eat and drink, indeed, as beasts do; but those are not actions that obstruct the functions of the soul; in these we maintain our advantage over them; but this subjects all other thoughts, and by its imperious authority makes an ass of all Plato's divinity and philosophy too, and yet he complains not of it. In every thing else a man may keep some decorum, all other operations submit to the rules of decency; this cannot so much as in imagination appear other than vicious or ridiculous. Examine if you can therein find one wise and discreet proceeding. Alexander said[2] that he chiefly knew himself to be mortal by this act and sleeping. Sleep suffocates and suppresses the faculties of the soul; the familiarity with women does likewise dissipate and exhaust them. Truly, 'tis a mark not only of our original corruption, but also of our vanity and deformity.

Why is love, with which nature inspires us, to be condemned.

On the one hand, nature pushes us on to it, having fixed the most noble, useful, and pleasant of all her functions to this desire; and, on the other, leaves us to accuse and avoid it, as insolent and indecent, to blush at it, and to recommend abstinence. Are we not, in fact, brutes to call that work brutish which begets us? People of differing religions have concurred in several

[1] Horace, *Sat.* I. i. 24. [2] Plutarch, *How to distinguish a Flatterer.*

ceremonies, as sacrifices, lamps, burning incense, fasts, and offerings; and amongst others, in condemning this act; all opinions come to this, besides the so extended custom of circumcision, which is for punishment of it. We have perhaps reason to blame ourselves for being guilty of so foolish a production as man, and to call the act and parts shameful that are employed in the work (I am sure mine are now properly shameful and abject). The Essenians, of whom Pliny speaks,[1] kept up their nation several ages without nurse or baby-clouts, by the arrival of strangers, who following this pretty humour, came continually into them; a whole nation resolute rather to hazard a total extermination, than to engage themselves in female embraces, and rather to lose a succession of men than to beget one. 'Tis said that Zeno never had to do with a woman but once in his life, and then out of civility, that he might not seem too obstinately to disdain the sex.[2] Every one avoids seeing a man born, every one runs to see him die; to destroy a man a spacious field is sought out, and in the face of the sun; but to make him, we creep into as dark and private a corner as we can; 'tis a man's duty to withdraw himself from the light to do it; but 'tis glory, and the fountain of many virtues to know how to destroy what we have done; the one is injury, the other favour; for Aristotle says that to do any one a benefit, in a certain phrase of his country, is to kill him. The Athenians,[3] to couple the disgrace of these two actions, having to purge the Isle of Delos, and to justify themselves to Apollo, interdicted at once all birth and burial in the precincts thereof: *Nostri nosmet pœnitet.*[4] "We are ashamed of ourselves."

There are some nations that will not be seen to eat.[5] I know a lady, and of the best quality, who has the same opinion, that it is an ill sight to see women chew their meat, that it takes away much from their grace and beauty, and therefore unwillingly

There are people who do not care that any should see them eat.

1 *Nat. Hist.* v. 17.
2 Laertius, *in Vitâ.*
3 Thucydides, iii. 104.
4 Terence, *Phormio*, i. 3, 20.
5 Leo, *Description of Africa.*

appears at a public table with an appetite; and I know a man also that cannot endure to see another eat, nor be seen himself; and is more shy of company in putting in than putting out. In the Turkish empire there are a great number of men who, to excel others, never suffer themselves to be seen when they make their repast; who never have more than one a week; who cut and mangle their faces and limbs, and never speak to any one. Fanatic people! who think to honour their nature by disnaturing themselves; that value themselves upon their contempt of themselves, and grow better by being worse! What monstrous animal is this, that is a horror to himself, to whom his delights are grievous, and who weds himself to misfortunes! There are who conceal their life,

Exilioque domos et dulcia limina mutant,[1]

"There in exile roam,
Seek a new sun, and leave their blissful home,"

and withdraw them from the sight of other men; that avoid health and cheerfulness as dangerous and prejudicial qualities. Not only many sects, but many nations, curse their birth and bless their death; and there is a place where the sun is abominated and darkness adored. We are only ingenious in using ourselves ill; 'tis the real quarry our wits fly at; and wit, when misapplied, is a dangerous tool!

Men who conceal themselves from sight, and are ingenious in using themselves ill.

O miseri! quorum gaudia crimen habent.[2]

"O wretched men! whose pleasures are a crime!"

Alas, poor man! thou hast enough inconveniences that are inevitable, without increasing them by thine own invention; and art miserable enough by nature, without being so by art; thou hast real and essential deformities enough, without forging those that are imaginary; is the little ease thou hast, too much for thee, that thou wouldst abridge the half of that?

[1] Virgil, *Georgic* ii. 511. [2] Pseudo-Gallus, i. 180

Dost thou find that thou hast performed all the necessary offices that nature has enjoined thee, and that she is idle in thee, if thou dost not oblige thyself to more and new ones? Thou dost not stick to infringe the universal and undoubted laws, but stickest close to those confederate and fantastic ones of thy own; and by how much more particular, uncertain, and contradictory they are, by so much thou employest thy whole endeavour in them; the laws of thy parish occupy and bind thee; those of God and the world concern thee not. Run but a little over the examples of this kind; thy life is full of them.

To talk discreetly of love only stimulates it the more.

The verses of these two poets treating so reservedly and discreetly of wantonness as they do, methinks they discover it much more. Ladies cover their persons with network, as priests do several sacred things; and painters shade their pictures, to give them greater lustre; and 'tis said that the sun and wind strike more violently by reflection than in a direct line. The Egyptian wisely answered him who asked him what he had under his cloak; "It is hid under my cloak," said he, "that thou mayest not know what it is:"[1] but there are certain other things that people hide only to show them. Hear this one, that speaks plainer:—

> Et nudam pressi corpus ad usque meum;[2]
>
> "And pressed her naked body close to mine;"

methinks I am eunuched with the expression. Let Martial turn up Venus's coats as high as he can, he cannot show her so naked; he who says all that is to be said gluts and disgusts us. He who is afraid to express himself, draws us on to guess at more than is meant; there is a kind of treachery in this sort of modesty, and especially whilst half opening, as they[3] do, so fair a path to imagination; both the action and description should give a relish to their theft.

[1] Plutarch, *on Curiosity*, c. 3.
[2] Ovid, *Amor.* l. 5, 24.
[3] *Virgil* and *Lucretius.*

The more respectful, more timorous, more coy and secret love of the Spaniards and Italians pleases me; I know not who, of old, wished his neck as long as that of a crane, that he might the longer taste what he had swallowed; it had been better wished in this quick and precipitous pleasure, especially in such natures as mine, that have the fault of being too prompt. To stop its flight and delay it with preambles, all things, a wink, a bow, a word, a sign, stand for favour and recompense betwixt them. Was it not an excellent piece of thrift in him that could dine on the steam of the roast? 'Tis a passion that mixes, with very little of solid essence, much more of vanity and feverish raving, and we are to reward and pay it accordingly. Let us teach the ladies to value and esteem themselves, to amuse and fool us. We give the last charge at the first onset; the French impetuosity will still show itself. By spinning out their favours, and exposing them in small parcels, all, even miserable old age, will find some little share of reward, according to their worth and merit. He who has no fruition but in fruition, who wins nothing unless he sweeps the stakes, who takes no pleasure in the chase but in the quarry, ought not to introduce himself into our school. The more steps and degrees there are, so much higher and more honourable is the uppermost seat; we should take a pleasure in being conducted to it, as in magnificent palaces, by porticos, entries, long and pleasant galleries, by many turns and windings. This disposition of things would turn to our advantage; we should there longer stay, and longer love; without hope and without desire we proceed not worth a pin. Our conquest and entire possession is what they ought infinitely to dread; when they wholly surrender themselves up to the mercy of our fidelity and constancy they run a mighty hazard; they are virtues very rare, and hard to be found; they are no sooner ours but we are no more theirs:—

Love ought to be made gradually, and without precipitation.

Postquam cupidæ mentis satiata libido est,
Verba nihil metuere, nihil perjuria curant;[1]

"When our desires and lusts once sated are,
For oaths and promises we little care;"

and Thrasonides,[2] a young man of Greece, was so in love with his passion, that having gained a mistress's consent, he refused to enjoy her, that he might not by fruition quench and stupefy the unquiet ardour of which he was so proud, and with which he so pleased himself. Dearness is a good sauce to meat. Do but observe how much the form of salutation, particular to our nation, has by its facility made kisses, which Socrates says[3] are so powerful and dangerous for stealing hearts, of no esteem. It is a nauseous and injurious custom for ladies, that they must be obliged to lend their lips to every fellow that has three footmen at his heels,[4] how nasty or deformed soever,—

Cujus livida naribus caninis,
Dependet glacies, rigetque barba . . .
Centum occurrere malo culilingis:[5]

and we do not get much by the bargain; for as the world is divided, for three pretty women, we must kiss fifty ugly ones; and to a tender stomach, like those of my age, an ill kiss overpays a good one.

[1] Catullus, *Carm.* lxiv. 147.

[2] Laertius, vii. 130.

[3] Xenophon, *Mem. on Socrates*, i. 3, 11.

[4] The kiss of ceremony or salutation, which Montaigne here erroneously affirms to be peculiar to France, came, not long afterwards, to be regarded as a piece of great immodesty there, as appears from Dr. Heylin's "Survaye of France." When the Doctor visited that country, in 1625, he thought it strange and uncivil that the ladies should turn away from the proffer of a salutation; and he indignantly exclaims, "that the chaste and innocent kiss of an English gentlewoman is more in heaven than their best devotions."—Erasmus, in a letter, urging his friend Andrelinus to come to England, very pleasantly makes use of this custom to strengthen his invitation. "If, Faustus," says he, "thou knewest the advantages of England, thou wouldst run hither with winged feet, and if the gout would not suffer that, thou wouldst wish thyself a Dædalus. For, to name one among many, here are girls with divine countenances, bland and courteous, and whom thou wouldst readily prefer to thy Muses. And besides, there is a custom which can never be sufficiently praised; for, if you visit anywhere, you are dismissed with kisses; if you return, these sweet things are again rendered; if any one goes away with you, the kisses are divided; wherever you go you are abundantly kissed. In short, move which way you will, all things are full of delight." Erasmus, *Ep.* v. 10.

[5] Martial, vii. 94. The Latin is the only language that is so licentious as to convey ideas so gross and nasty. Seneca says it is better to suppress some things in silence, though it be to the detriment of the cause, rather than to transgress the bounds of modesty. Seneca, *Controv.* i. 2, towards the end.

In Italy they passionately court, even their common women, who prostitute themselves for money, and justify the doing so by saying that there are degrees of fruition; and that by courting they will procure themselves that which is best and most entire; they sell nothing but their bodies, the will is too free, and too much its own to be exposed to sale. So say these, that 'tis the will they undertake, and they have reason; 'tis indeed the will that we are to serve, and to have to do withal. I abhor to imagine as mine a body without affection; and this madness is, methinks, cousin-german to that of the boy, who would needs lie with the beautiful statue of Venus, made by Praxiteles,[1] or that of the furious Egyptian, who violated the dead carcass of a woman he was embalming, which was the occasion of the law, afterwards made in Egypt, that the corpse of beautiful young women, and of those of good quality, should be kept three days before they should be delivered to those whose office it was to take care for the interment.[2] Periander did more wonderfully, who extended his conjugal affection (more regular and legitimate) to the enjoyment of his wife Melissa after she was dead.[3] Does it not seem a lunatic humour in the moon, seeing she could not otherwise enjoy her darling Endymion, to lay him for several months asleep, and to please herself with the fruition of a boy, who stirred not but in his sleep? So I say that we love a body without a soul, when we love a body without its consent and concurring desire. All enjoyings are not alike; there are some that are hectic and languishing; a thousand other causes, besides good-will, may procure us this favour from the ladies; this is not a sufficient testimony of affection; treachery may lurk there as well as elsewhere; they sometimes go to it but by halves,—

The corpse of beautiful women kept three days in Egypt, before they were interred.

> Tanquam thura merumque parent
> Absentem, marmoreamve putes:[4]

[1] Val. Max. viii 2, *Ext.* 5.
[2] Herod. ii. 89.
[3] Laertius, i. 96.
[4] Martial, xi. 103, 12, and 59, 8.

"So coldly they unto the work prepare,
You'd think them absent, or else marble were:"

I know some who had rather lend that than their coach, and who only impart themselves that way. You are to examine whether your company pleases them upon any other account, or for that only, as some strong-limbed groom; in what character, and what degree of favour you are with them,—

Tibi si datur uni:
Quo lapide illa diem candidiore notat.[1]

"Whether thy mistress favour thee alone,
And mark thy day out with the whiter stone."

What if they eat your bread with the sauce of a more pleasing imagination?

Te tenet, absentes alios suspirat amores.[2]

"While in her arms entwin'd, you don't discover
She pants with longing for an absent lover."

What! have we not seen one, in these days of ours, that made use of this act upon the account of a most horrid revenge, by that means to kill and poison, as he did, an excellent woman?

Such as know Italy will not think it strange if, for this subject, I seek not elsewhere for examples; for that nation may be called the regent of the world in this. They have generally more handsome, and fewer ugly, women than we; but for rare and excelling beauties, I think we may have as many as they. I think the same of their wits; of those of the common sort they have evidently far more; brutal stupidity is without comparison much rarer there; but for singular souls and of the highest form, we are nothing indebted to them. If I should carry on the comparison, I might say, as touching valour, that on the contrary it is, to what it is with them, common and natural with us; but sometimes we see them possessed of it to such a degree as surpasses the greatest examples we can produce. The marriages of that country are defective in this; their custom commonly imposes so rude

[1] Catullus, lxviii. 147. [2] Tibullus, i. 6, 35.

and so slavish a law upon the women, that the most distant acquaintance with a stranger is held as criminal in them as the most intimate; a law which necessarily renders all such acquaintances, when they are made, substantial; and seeing that all comes to one account, they have no hard choice to make; and when they have broken down the fence, believe me, they launch out to some tune: *Luxuria ipsis vinculis, sicut fera bestia, irritata, deinde emissa.*[1] "Lust, like a wild beast, being more enraged by being bound, breaks from his chains with greater wildness." They must give them a little more rein:—

> Vidi ego nuper equum, contra sua frena tenacem,
> Ore reluctanti fulminis ire modo:[2]

> "The fiery courser, whom no art can stay,
> Or reined force, doth oft fair means obey."

The desire of company is allayed by giving a little liberty. We run pretty nearly the same fortune; they go to extremes from their constraint; we from our license. 'Tis a good custom we have in France, that our sons are received into high families, there to be entertained and bred up pages, as in a school of nobleness; and 'tis looked upon as a discourtesy and an affront to refuse a gentleman; I have taken notice (for so many families so many different forms) that the ladies who have been strictest with their women attendants have had no better luck than those who allowed them a greater liberty; there should be moderation in all things; one must leave a great deal of their conduct to their own discretion; for, when all comes to all, no discipline can curb them throughout. It is certain that she who comes off with flying colours from a school of liberty, brings with her whereon to repose more confidence than she who comes away sound from a severe and strict education.

Modesty necessary to women.

Our fathers dressed up their daughters' looks in bashfulness and fear; we ours in confidence and assurance, the courage and the desires being alike in

[1] Livy, xxxiv. 4. [2] Ovid, *Amor*, iii. 4, 13.

both cases. We understand nothing of the matter; we must leave it to the Sarmates, that may not lie with a man till with their own hands they have first killed another in battle.[1] For me, who have no other title left me to these things but by the ears, 'tis sufficient, if, according to the privilege of my age, they retain me for one of their counsel. I advise them then, and men too, to abstinence; but if the age we live in will not endure it, at least to modesty and discretion; for as the story says of Aristippus,[2] speaking to some young men, who blushed to see him go into a scandalous house: "The vice is in not coming out, not in going in." Let her that has no care for her conscience have yet some regard to her reputation; and though she be rotten within, let her carry a fair outside at least.

I commend a gradation and procrastination in their bestowing of favours; Plato declares that, in all sorts of love, facility and promptness are forbidden the defendant. 'Tis a sign of eagerness, so rashly, suddenly, and hand-over-head, to surrender themselves, and they ought to disguise it with all the art they have; in carrying themselves with modesty and reluctance in granting their last favours, they much more allure our desires, and hide their own. Let them still fly before us, even those who have most mind to be overtaken; they conquer more surely by flying, as the Scythians do. Indeed, according to the law that nature has imposed upon them, it is not properly for them either to will or desire; their part is to suffer, consent, and obey; and for this it is that nature has given them a perpetual capacity, which in us is but occasional and uncertain; they are always fit for the encounter, that they may be always ready when we are so, *pati natæ:*[3] "born to endure;" and whereas she has ordered that our appetites shall be manifest by a prominent demonstration, she would have theirs to be hidden and concealed within, and has furnished them with parts improper for ostentation, and simply defensive. Such proceedings as this that follows,

[1] Herod. iv. 117. [2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.* [3] Seneca, *Ep.* 95.

must be left to the Amazonian license: Alexander marching his army through Hyrcania, Thalestris, queen of the Amazons, came with three hundred horse of her own sex, well mounted and armed, having left the remainder of a very great army that followed her, behind the neighbouring mountains, to pay him a visit; and publicly and in plain terms told him, that the fame of his valour and victories had brought her thither to see him, and to make him an offer of her forces, to assist him in the pursuit of his enterprises; and that, finding him so handsome, young, and vigorous, she, who was also perfect in all her qualities, advised that they might lie together; to the end that from the most valiant woman of the world, and the bravest man then living, there might spring some great and wonderful issue for the time to come. Alexander returned her thanks for all the rest; but to give leisure for the accomplishment of her last demand, he stayed thirteen days in that place, which were spent in royal feasting and jollity, for the welcome of so brave a princess.[1]

Alexander and Thalestris.

We are almost throughout incompetent and unjust judges of their actions, as they are of ours. I confess the truth when it makes against me, as when 'tis on my side. 'Tis an abominable intemperance that pushes them on so often to change, and that hinders them to limit their affection to any one person whatever; as is evident in that goddess to whom are attributed so many changes and so many lovers; but 'tis true withal that love is contrary to its own nature if it be not violent, and that violence is contrary to its nature if it be constant. And they who make it a wonder, exclaim, and keep such a clutter to find out the causes of this frailty of theirs, as unnatural and not to be believed; how comes it to pass they do not discern how often they are themselves guilty

[1] Diodorus, Sic. xvii. 16. But this historian does not say that this queen of the Amazons offered Alexander troops to aid him in his military expeditions; and Quintus Curtius, vi. 5, says expressly that Alexander having asked her if she would go to the wars with him, she excused herself by saying, that she had left nobody to be guardian of her kingdom: "Causata, sine custode regnum reliquisse."

of the same, without any astonishment or miracle at all? It would peradventure be more strange to see the passion fixed; 'tis not a simply corporeal passion; if there be no end in avarice and ambition, there is doubtless none the more in desire; it still lives after satiety; and 'tis impossible to prescribe either constant satisfaction or end; it ever goes beyond its possession.

Love a passion naturally subject to change.

And inconstancy perhaps is in some sort more pardonable in them than in us; they may plead, as well as we, the inclination to variety and novelty, common to us both; and secondly, which we cannot, that they buy a pig in a poke. Joan, Queen of Naples, caused her first husband, Andreosso,[1] to be hanged at the bars of her window, in a halter of gold and silk, woven with her own hand, because that, in matrimonial performances, she neither found his parts nor abilities answer the expectation she had conceived from his stature, beauty, youth, and activity, by which she had been caught and deceived. They may allege that there is more required in doing than in suffering; and so they are on their part always at least provided for necessity, whereas on our part it may fall out otherwise. For this reason it was that Plato, in his *Laws*, wisely provided that, before every marriage, to determine of the fitness of the persons, the judges should see the young men who pretended to it stark naked, and the women naked to the girdle only. When they come to try us they do not perhaps find us worthy of their choice:—

Inconstancy pardonable in women.

Men stripped naked before marriage

> Experta latus, madidoque simillima loro
> Inguina, nec lassa stare coacta manu,
> Deserit imbelles thalamos.[2]

> "All efforts vain t' excite his vigour dead,
> The married virgin flies th' injoyous bed."

'Tis not enough that a man's will be good; weakness and insufficiency lawfully break a marriage,—

[1] Andrew (whom the Italians called Andreosso), son of Charles, King of Hungary. See Bayle, art. *Joan I. of Naples.*

[2] Martial, vii. 58, 3.

Et quærendum aliunde foret nervosius illud,
Quod posset zonam solvere virgineam:[1]

"And elsewhere seek a man fit for love's toil:"

and why not? and, according to her own measure, an amorous intelligence, more bold and active,

Si blando nequeat superesse labori.[2]

"If strength they want love's task to undergo."

But is it not a great impudence to offer our imperfections and imbecilities, where we desire to please, and leave a good opinion and esteem of ourselves? For the little that I am able to do now,

Ad unum
Mollis opus,[3]

"One bout a night,"

I would not trouble a woman that I reverence and fear:—

Fuge suspicari,
Cujus undenum trepidavit ætas
Claudere lustrum.[4]

"Suspect not him
On whose love's wild-fire age doth throw
Of fifty years the cooling snow."[5]

Nature should satisfy herself in having rendered age miserable, without making it ridiculous too. I hate to see it, for one poor inch of pitiful vigour, which comes upon it but thrice a week, to strut and set out itself with as great an air as if it could do mighty feats, a true flame of flax; and wonder to see it so boil and bubble at a time when it is so congealed and extinguished. This appetite ought not to appertain to anything but the flower of beautiful youth; trust not to it because you see it seconds that indefatigable, full, constant, and magnanimous ardour that is in you, for it will certainly leave you in the lurch at your greatest need; but rather return it to some tender, bashful, and ignorant boy who yet trembles under the rod, and blushes:—

[1] Catullus, *Carm.* lxvii. 27.
[2] Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 127.
[3] Horace, *Epod.* xii. 15.
[4] Horace, *ode.* ii. 4, 12.
[5] *Æneid*, xii. 67.

Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
Si quis ebur, vel mixta rubent ubi lilia multa
Albâ rosâ.

"Thus Indian iv'ry shows
Which with a bord'ring hue of purple glows;
Or lilies damasked with the neighbouring rose."

He who can stay till the morning, without dying for shame, to behold the disdain of the fair eyes of her who knows so well your fumbling impertinence,—

Et taciti fecere tamen convicia vultus,[1]

"And though she nothing say,
How ill she likes my work her looks betray,"

never had the satisfaction and the glory of having battled them till they were weary, with the vigorous performance of one heroic night. When I have observed any one to be tired of me, I have not presently accused her levity; but have been in doubt if I had not reason rather to complain of nature. She has certainly used me very uncivilly and unkindly;—

Si non longa satis, si non bene mentula crassa;
Nimirum sapiunt, videntque parvam
Matronæ quoque mentulam illibenter;[2]

and done me a most irreparable injury. Every member I have, as much one as another, is equally my own, and no other does more properly make me a man than this.

I universally owe my entire picture to the public. The wisdom of my instruction wholly consists in liberty and naked truth; disdaining to introduce little, feigned, common, and provincial rules into the catalogue of its real duties, all natural, general, and constant; of which civility and ceremony are daughters indeed, but illegitimate. We are sure to have the vices of appearance, when we have had those of essence; when we have done with these, we run full drive upon others,

[1] Ovid, *Amor.* i. 7, 21.

[2] Of these three verses the first is the beginning of a sort of epigram, entitled *Priapus*, in the *Veterum Poetarum Catalecta*, and the two others are taken from one of the first epigrams of the same collection, *Ad Matronas*, two of which are parodied by Montaigne. The lines are altogether unsusceptible of translation.

if we find it must be so; for there is danger that we shall fancy new offices, to excuse our negligence towards the natural ones, and to confound them. That this is so, it is seen that in places where faults are crimes, crimes are but faults; and that in nations where the laws of courtesy are most rare and remiss, the primitive laws of common reason are better observed, the innumerable multitude of so many duties stifling and dissipating our care. Application to trivial things diverts us from those that are necessary and just. Oh, how these superficial men take an easy and plausible way in comparison of ours! These are shadows wherewith we palliate and pay one another; but we do not pay, but inflame our reckoning to that great judge, who tucks up our rags and tatters about our shameful parts, and is not nice to view us all over, even to our inmost and most secret vilenesses; it were an useful decency of our maidenly modesty, could it keep him from this discovery. In fine, whoever could reclaim man from so scrupulous a verbal superstition, would do the world no great disservice. Our life is divided betwixt folly and prudence. Whoever will write of it but what is reverend and canonical, will leave more than half behind. I do not excuse myself to myself; and if I did, it should rather be for my excuses that I would excuse myself, than for any other fault; I excuse myself, of certain humours, which I think more strong in number than those that are on my side. In consideration of which, I will further say this (for I desire to please every one, though a thing hard to do: *Esse unum hominem accommodatum ad tantam morum ac sermonum et voluntatum varietatem:*[1] "That one man accommodates himself to so great a variety of manners, discourses, and wills") ; that they ought not to condemn me for what I make authorities, received and approved of by many ages, to utter; and that there is no reason that, for want of rhyme, they should refuse me the liberty they allow even to churchmen of our nation, and of which here are two specimens:—

[1] Q. Cicero, *de Petit. Consul.* c. 14.

Rimula, dispeream, ni monogramma tua est;[1]
Un vit d'amy la contente, et bien traicte;[2]

besides many others. I love modesty, and 'tis not out of judgment that I have chosen this scandalous way of speaking; 'tis nature that has chosen it for me. I recommend it not, no more than other forms that are contrary to common custom; but I excuse it, and by circumstances, both general and particular, alleviate the accusation.

But to proceed: whence also can proceed that usurpation of sovereign authority you take upon you over the women who favour you at their own expense,—

Si furtiva dedit nigra munuscula nocte,[3]

"If in the silence of the night
She has permitted stolen delight,"

so that you presently assume the interests, coldness, and authority of a husband; whence, I ask, can it be derived? 'Tis a free contract; why do you not begin, as you intend to hold on? there is no prescription upon voluntary things. 'Tis against the form, but it is true, withal, that I in my time have carried on this affair, as well as the nature of it would permit, as conscientiously, and with as much colour of justice, as any other contract whatever; and that I never pretended other affection than what I really had, and have truly acquainted them with the declination, vigour, and birth of the same, the fits and intermissions; a man does not always hold on at the same rate. I have been so sparing of my promises that I think I have been better than my word. They have found me faithful to their inconstancy, even to a confessed, and even to a multiplied, inconstancy. I never broke with them whilst I had any hold at all; and what occasion soever they have given me, never broke with them to hatred or contempt; for such privacies, though obtained upon never so scandalous terms, do yet

The author's fidelity in love.

[1] Theodore Beza, *Juvenilia.* See Bayle, art. *Beza.*

[2] St. Gelais, *Œuvres Poétiques*, p. 99

[3] Catullus, *Carm.* lxviii. 145.

oblige us to some good-will. I have sometimes, upon their tricks and evasions, discovered a little indiscreet anger and impatience; for I am naturally subject to rash emotions, which, though slight and short, often spoil my marketing. Would they freely have consulted my judgment, I should not have stuck to have given them sharp and paternal counsels, and to have pinched them to the quick. If I have left them any cause to complain of me, 'tis rather to have found in me, in comparison of the modern custom, a love foolishly conscientious, than any thing else. I have kept my word in things wherein I might easily have been dispensed; they then sometimes surrendered themselves with reputation, and upon articles that they were willing enough should be broken by the conqueror. I have more than once made pleasure in its greatest temptation strike to the interest of their honour; and where reason importuned me, have armed them against myself; so that they conducted themselves more decently and securely by my rules, when they frankly referred themselves to them, than they would have done by their own. I have ever, as much as I could, wholly taken upon myself alone the hazard of our assignations to acquit them, and have always contrived our meetings after the hardest and most unusual manner, as less suspected, and moreover, in my opinion, more accessible. They are chiefly more open where they think they are the most securely shut; things least feared are less defended and observed; one may more boldly dare what nobody thinks you will dare, which by the difficulty becomes easy. Never had any man his approaches more impertinently genital. This way of loving is more according to discipline, but 'tis most ridiculous and ineffectual to our people. Who better knows it than I, yet I repent me not of it. I have nothing there more to lose:—

> Me tabula sacer
> Votiva paries indica uvida
> Suspendisse potenti
> Vestimenta maris deo;[1]

[1] Horace, *Od.* i. 5, 13.

"For me my votive tablet shows
That I have hung my dripping clothes
At Neptune's shrine:"

'tis now my time to speak out. But I might perhaps say, as another would do, "Thou talkest idly, my friend; the love of thy time has little commerce with faith and integrity:"—

Hæc si tu postules
Ratione certa facere, nihilo plus agas,
Quam si des operam, ut cum ratione insanias:[1]

"These things if thou wilt undertake,
By reason, permanent to make;
This will be all thou'lt get by it
Wisely to run out of thy wit."

But, on the contrary, if it were for me to begin again, assuredly it should be by the same method and the same progress, how unfruitful soever it might prove. Folly and ignorance are commendable in an incommendable action; the further I go from their humour in this, I approach so much nearer to my own.

As to the rest, in this traffic, I did not suffer myself to be totally carried away; I pleased myself in it, but did not forget myself withal. I kept the little sense and discretion that nature has given me entire for their service and my own; a little emotion, but no dotage. My conscience also was engaged in it, even to debauchery and dissoluteness, but never so far as to ingratitude, treachery, malice, and cruelty. I did not purchase the pleasure of this vice at any price, but contented myself with its proper and single cost: *Nullum intra se vitium est.*[2] "Nothing is a vice in itself." I almost equally hate a stupid and slothful laziness, as I do a toilsome and painful employment; the one pinches, the other lays me asleep. I like wounds as well as bruises, and cuts as well as dry blows. I found in this commerce, when I was the most able for it, a just moderation betwixt these extremes. Love is a sprightly, lively, and gay agitation; I was neither trou-

[1] Terence, *Eunuch.* i. 1, 16.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 95. The text has *manet*, not *est*.

bled nor afflicted with it, but heated, and, moreover, disordered. A man must stop there; it hurts nobody but fools. A young man asked the philosopher Panetius, if it was becoming a wise man to be in love? "Let the wise man look to that," answered he, "but[1] let not thou and I, who are not such, engage ourselves in so stirring and violent an affair, that enslaves us to others, and renders us contemptible to ourselves." He said true, that we are not to intrust a thing so precipitous in itself to a soul that has not wherewithal to withstand its assaults, and disprove the saying of Agesilaus, "that prudence and love cannot live together."[2] 'Tis a vain employment, 'tis true; unbecoming, shameful, illicit, and illegitimate; but, to carry it on after this manner, I look upon it as wholesome, and proper to enliven a drowsy soul, and to rouse up a heavy body; and, as a physician, I would prescribe it to a man of my form and condition, as soon as any other recipe whatever, to rouse and keep him in vigour till well advanced in years, and to defer the approaches of age. Whilst we are but in the suburbs, and that the pulse yet beats,—

> Dum nova canities, dum prima et recta senectus,
> Dum superest Lachesi quod torqueat, et pedibus me
> Porto meis, nullo dextram subeunte bacillo;[3]

> "While something yet of health and strength remains,
> While yet my steps no bending staff sustains,
> While few gray hairs upon my head are seen;"

we have need to be tickled by some such nipping incitation as this. Do but observe what youth, vigour, and gayety it inspired Anacreon withal; and Socrates, who was then older than I, speaking of an amorous object; "Leaning," says he,[4] "my shoulder to her shoulder, and my head to hers, as we were reading together in a book, I felt, it is a fact, a sudden sting in my shoulder, like the biting of a flea, which I still

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 117.

[2] "Oh! how hard a matter is it," said Agesilaus, "for a man to be in love and in his sober senses at one and the same time!" Plutarch, *in Vitâ.*

[3] Juvenal, iii. 26.

[4] Xenophon, *Banquet*, iv. 27.

felt above five days after, and a continual itching crept into my heart." A mere accidental touch, and of a shoulder, to heat and excite a soul mortified and enervated by age, and the most moderate liver of all mankind! And why not? Socrates was a man, and would neither be, nor be like, any other thing. Philosophy does not contend against natural pleasures, provided they be moderate; and only preaches moderation, not a total abstinence. The power of resistance is employed against those that are adulterate, and introduced by innovation; philosophy says that the appetites of the body ought not to be augmented by the mind; and intelligently warns us not to stir up hunger by satiurity; not to stuff instead of filling the belly; to avoid all enjoyments that may bring us to want, and all meats and drinks that procure thirst and hunger, as in the service of love, she prescribes us to take such an object as may simply satisfy the body's real need, and may not stir the soul, which ought only barely to follow and assist the body, without mixing in the affair. But have I not reason to believe that these precepts, which also, in my opinion, are in other respects somewhat rigorous, only apply to a body that really performs its office; and that in a body broken with age, as in a weak stomach, 'tis excusable to warm and support it by art, and by the mediation of the fancy, to restore that appetite and vivacity it has lost in itself?

Natural pleasures allowed if moderate.

May we not say that there is nothing in us, during this earthly prison, that is purely either corporeal or spiritual, and that we injuriously dissever a man alive, and that it seems but reasonable that we should regard as favourably, at least, the use of pleasure as we do that of pain? This[1] was (for example) vehement even to perfection in the souls of the saints by penitence; the body had there naturally a share by the right of union, and yet might have but little part in the cause. And yet are they not contented that it should barely follow and assist the afflicted soul; they have afflicted

[1] *Pain.*

it by itself, with grievous and peculiar torments, to the end that, by emulation of one another, the soul and body might plunge man into misery, by so much more salutiferous, as it is more painful and severe. In like manner, is it not injustice in bodily pleasures to subdue and keep under the soul, and say that it must therein be dragged along, as to some enforced and servile obligation and necessity? 'Tis rather her part to aid and cherish them, there to present herself and to invite them, the authority of ruling belonging to her; as it is also her part, in my opinion, in pleasures that are proper to her, to inspire and infuse into the body all the feeling and sense it is capable of, and to study how to make it pleasant and useful to it. For it is good reason, as they say, that the body should not pursue its appetites to the prejudice of the mind; but why is it not also reason that the mind should not pursue hers to the prejudice of the body?

The advantages that may be reaped from love in an advanced age.

I have no other passion to keep me in breath. What avarice, ambition, quarrels, and lawsuits do for others, who, like me, have no particular employment, love would more commodiously do; it would restore to me vigilancy, sobriety, care as to my deportment and person; reassure my countenance that these sour looks, these deformed and pitiable sour looks of old age, might not step in to disgrace it; would again put me upon sound and wise studies, by which I might render myself more loved and esteemed, clearing my mind of the despair of itself, and of its use, and reintegrate it to itself; would divert me from a thousand troublesome thoughts and a thousand melancholic humours, that idleness and ill health load us withal, at such an age; would warm again, in dreams at least, the blood that nature has given over; will hold up the chin, and a little stretch out the nerves, the vigour and gayety of life of that poor man who is going full drive to his ruin. But I very well understand that is a commodity very hard to recover. By weakness and long experience our taste has become more delicate and nice; we ask most when

we bring least, and will have the most choice when we least deserve to be accepted. Knowing ourselves for what we are, we are less confident and more distrustful; nothing can assure us of being beloved, considering our condition and theirs. I am out of countenance to find myself in company with young folks, full of wantonness and vigour,

> Cujus in indomito constantior inguine nervus,
> Quam nova collibus arbor inhæret.[1]

To what end should we go and intrude our misery amid their gay and sprightly humours?

> Possint ut juvenes visere fervidi,
> Multo non sine risu,
> Dilapsam in cineres facem?[2]

> "That youths, in fervent wishes bold,
> Not without laughter, may behold
> A torch, whose early fire
> Could ev'ry breast with love inflame,
> Now faintly spread a sickly gleam,
> And in a smoke expire."

They have strength and reason on their side; let us give way, we cannot make good our ground; and these blossoms of springing beauty suffer not themselves to be handled by such benumbed hands, nor be dealt with by mere material means; for, as the old philosopher[3] answered one that jeered him, because he could not gain the favour of a young girl he made love to; "Friend, the hook will not stick in such soft cheese." It is a commerce that requires relation and correspondence; the other pleasures we receive may be acknowledged by recompenses of another nature; but this is not to be paid but with the same kind of coin. In earnest, in this sport, the pleasure I give more tickles my imagination than that I receive. Now, as he has nothing of generosity in him that can receive a courtesy where he confers none, it must

[1] Horace, *Epod.* xii. 19. "Who are always in a capacity of performing well." This is a short paraphrase on the distich, which those who do not understand Latin must be content with; for the terms made use of by Horace convey such gross ideas that I do not choose to translate them more closely.

[2] Horace. *Od.* iv. 13, 26.

[3] *Bion*; Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

needs be a mean soul that will owe all, and can be contented to maintain a correspondence with persons to whom he is a continual charge; there is no beauty, favour, nor privacy so exquisite, that a gallant man ought to desire at this rate. If they can only be kind to us out of pity, I had much rather die than live upon charity. I would have a right to ask it in the style that I saw some beg in Italy, *Fate ben per voi*, "Do good to yourself;" or after the manner that Cyrus exhorted his soldiers, "Who loves himself let him follow me." "Comfort yourself," some one will say to me, "with women of your own condition, whose company, being of the same age, will render itself more easy to you." O ridiculous and stupid composition!

Nolo
Barbam vellere mortuo leoni;[1]

"Tear not the sleeping lion's beard;"

Xenophon[2] uses it for an objection and an accusation against Menon, that he never made love to any but old women. I take more pleasure in merely seeing the just and sweet mixture of two young beauties, or only meditating it in my fancy, than to be myself an actor in one made up of miserable and wan old age. I leave that fantastic appetite to the Emperor Galba, that was only for hard old flesh;[3] and to this poor wretch:—

O ego dii faciant talem te cernere possim,
Caraque mutatis oscula ferre comis,
Amplectique meis corpus non pingue lacertis![4]

"O! would to heav'n I such might thee behold,
To kiss those locks now thou in cares art old,
And thy worn body in my arms enfold!"

and amongst the chief deformities, I reckon forced and artificial beauty. Emonez, a young courtezan of Chios, thinking by fine dressing to acquire the beauty that nature had denied her, came

Painted beauties reckoned among deformities.

[1] Martial, x. 90, 9.
[2] *Anab.* ii. 6, 15.
[3] Suetonius, *in Vitâ.*
[4] *Ovid*, who from his melancholy place of exile writes thus to his wife. *Ex Ponto*, i. 4, 49.

to the philosopher Arcesilaus, and asked him if it was possible for a wise man to be in love; "Yes," replied he,[1] "provided it be not with a factitious and sophisticated beauty like thine." The ugliness of a confessed old age is to me less ugly and less old than another that is polished and painted up. Shall I say it without the danger of having my throat cut?—love, in my opinion, is not properly and naturally in its season, but in the age next to childhood:—

At what age love is in his throne.

> Quem si puellarum insereres choro,
> Mire sagaces falleret hospites,
> Discrimem obscurum, solutis
> Crinibus, ambiguoque vultu;[2]

> "Who in the virgin choir defies
> The curious stranger's prying eyes
> So smooth his doubtful cheeks appear,
> So loose, so girlish, flows his hair;"

and beauty the same; for whereas Homer extends it so far as to the budding of the chin, Plato himself has observed this as rare. And the reason why the sophist Bion so pleasantly called the first appearing hairs of adolescence Aristogitons and Harmodians is sufficiently known.[3] I find it in virility already, in some sort, a little out of date, to say nothing of old age:—

> Importunus enim transvolat aridas
> Quercus;[4]

> "Love, restless, with quick motion flies
> From wither'd oaks;"

and Margaret, Queen of Navarre, like a woman, does very far extend the advantage of women, ordaining that it is time for them at thirty years old to convert the title of fair into that of good. The shorter authority we give him over our lives 'tis so much the better for us. Do but observe his port; 'tis a beardless boy. Who knows not how, in his school, they proceed contrary to all order? study, exercise,

1 Laertius, *in Vitâ*.
2 Horace, *Od.* ii. 5, 21.
3 See Plutarch, *on Love*, c. 34.
4 Horace, *Od.* iv. 13, 9.

and custom, are ways for insufficiency to proceed by; there novices rule; *Amor ordinem nescit.*[1] "Love knows no rules." Doubtless his conduct is much more graceful when mixed with inadvertency and trouble; miscarriages and ill successes give him appetite and grace; provided it be sharp and eager, 'tis no great matter whether it be prudent or no; do but observe how he goes reeling, tripping, and playing; you put him in the stocks when you guide him by art and wisdom; and restrain his divine liberty when you put him into those hairy and callous hands.

As to the rest, I often hear them set forth this intelligence as entirely spiritual, and disdain to put the interest the senses there have into consideration; everything there serves turn; but I can say that I have often seen that we have excused the weakness of their understandings in favour of their outward beauty; but have never seen that in favour of a mind, how mature and well-disposed soever, any one would lend a hand to a body that was never so little decayed. Why does not some one take it into her head to make that noble Socratical contract and exchange of body for soul? purchasing, at the price of her thighs, a philosophical and spiritual intelligence and regeneration, the highest value she can get for them. Plato[2] ordains, in his *Laws*, that he who has performed any signal and advantageous exploit in war, may not be refused during the whole expedition, whatever his age or deformity may be, a kiss or any other amorous favour, from any woman whatever. What he thinks to be so just in recommendation of military valour, why may it not be the same in recommendation of any other good quality? And why does not some woman take a fancy to prepossess, over her companions, the glory of this chaste love? I say chaste,—

> Nam si quando ad prælia ventum est,
> Ut quondam in stipulis magnus sine viribus ignis
> Incassum furit;[3]

[1] St. Jerome, *Epist. ad Chromat.* Anacreon, long before him, said much the same thing. See *Ode* 50, verse 24.

[2] *Republic*, v.

[3] *Georgic.* iii. 98. The application which Montaigne here makes of Virgil's words is very extraordinary, as will appear immediately to those who will be at the pains of consulting the original.

"For when to join love's battle they engage,
Like fire in straw they weakly spend their rage:"

the vices that are stifled in the thought are not the worst.

To conclude this notable commentary, which has escaped from me in a torrent of chatter, a torrent sometimes impetuous and hurtful,—

Ut missum sponsi furtivo munere malum
Procurrit casto virginis e gremio,
Quod miseræ oblitæ molli sub veste locatum,
Dum adventu matris prosilit, excutitur,
Atque iliud prono præceps agitur decursu:
Huic manat tristi conscius ore rubor,[1]

"As a fair apple by a lover sent
To 's mistress for a private compliment
Which tumbles from the modest virgin's lap,
Where she had quite forgot it by mishap,
When starting as her mother opes the door,
And falls out of her garments on the floor!
While as it rolls, and she betrays surprise,
A guilty blush her fair complexion dyes,"

I say that males and females are cast in the same mould, and that, education and custom excepted, the difference between them is not great. Plato indifferently invites both the one and the other to the society of all studies, exercises, commands, and occupations, military and civil, in his commonwealth; and the philosopher Anthisthenes took away all distinction between their virtue and ours.[2] It is much more easy to accuse one sex than to excuse the other; 'tis the old saying: "the pot and the kettle."

[1] Catullus, *Carm.* lxv. 19. [2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

CHAPTER VI.

OF COACHES.

It is no difficult matter to prove, that when great authors write of causes, they not only make use of those they think to be the true causes really, but also of such as they believe are not so, provided they have some beauty and invention; they speak true and usefully enough, if it be ingeniously. We cannot make ourselves sure of the supreme cause; and therefore collect a great many together, to see if it may not accidentally be amongst them,—

Namque unam dicere causam
Non satis est, verum plures, unde una tamen sit.[1]

"And thus my muse a store of causes brings;
For here, as in a thousand other things,
Tho' by one single cause th' effect is done,
Yet since 'tis hid, a thousand must be shown,
That we may surely hit that single one."

Why they say God bless you, when you sneeze.

Will you ask me whence the custom of blessing those that sneeze? we break wind three several ways; that which sallies from below is too filthy; that which breaks out from the mouth carries with it some reproach for having eaten too much; the third eruption is sneezing, which, because it proceeds from the head, and is without offence, we give it this civil reception. Do not laugh at this distinction, for they say 'tis Aristotle's.[2]

Why people are apt to vomit at sea.

I think I have read in Plutarch[3] (who, of all the authors I ever conversed with, is he that has best mixed art with nature, and judgment with knowledge) giving a reason for the rising of the stomach in those that are at sea, that it is occasioned by fear, having found out some reason by which he proves that fear may

[1] Lucret. vi. 704. [2] *Problem*, sect. 33, quæs. 9 [3] *On Natural Causes.*

produce such an effect. I, who am very subject to being sick, know very well that that cause concerns not me; and know it, not by argument, but by necessary experience. Without instancing what has been told me, that the same thing often happens in beasts, especially hogs, free from all apprehension of danger; and what an acquaintance of mine told me of himself, that being very subject to it, the disposition to vomit has three or four times gone off him, being very much afraid in a violent storm, as it happened to that ancient, *Pejus vexabar, quam ut periculum mihi succurreret;*[1] "I was too ill to think of my danger." I was never afraid upon the water, nor, indeed, anywhere else (and I have had just occasions enough before my eyes, if death be one), so as to be confounded and lose my judgment. Fear springs sometimes as well from want of judgment as from want of courage. All the dangers I have been in, I have looked upon without winking, with an open, sound, and entire sight; and besides, a man must have courage to fear. It has formerly served me better than some others, so to order my retreat, that it was, if not without fear, nevertheless without affright and astonishment; it was stirring indeed, but not amazed nor stupefied. Great souls go yet much farther, and represent flights not only sound and firm, but moreover fierce. Let us make a relation of that which Alcibiades reports[2] of Socrates, his fellow in arms: "I found him," says he, "after the rout of our army, him and Laches, in the rear of those that fled; and considered him at my leisure, and in security, for I was mounted on a good horse, and he on foot, and had so fought. I took notice, in the first place, how much judgment and resolution he showed, in comparison of Laches; and then the bravery of his march, nothing different from his ordinary gait; his sight firm and regular, considering and judging what passed about him, looking one while upon those, and then upon others, friends and enemies, after such a manner as encouraged the one, and signified to

What fear is.

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 53.

[2] Plato, *Banquet*

the others that he would sell his life dear to any one that should attempt to take it from him, and so they came off; for people are not willing to attack such kind of men, but pursue those they see are in a fright." This is the testimony of this great captain, which teaches us what we every day see, that nothing so much throws us into dangers as an inconsiderate eagerness to get ourselves clear of them: *Quò timoris minus est, eo minus ferme periculi est.*[1] "Where there is least fear, there is, for the most part, least danger." Our people are to blame to say that such a one is afraid of death when he expresses that he thinks of it, and foresees it. Foresight is equally convenient in what concerns us, whether good or ill; to consider and judge of the danger is, in some sort the reverse to being astonished thereat. I do not find myself strong enough to sustain the force and impetuosity of this passion of fear, nor of any other vehement passion whatever; if I was once conquered and beaten down, I should never rise again very sound; whoever should once make my soul lose her footing, would never set it upright again; she retastes and researches herself too profoundly, and too much to the quick, and therefore would never let the wound she had received heal and cicatrize. It has been well for me that no sickness has ever yet discomposed it; at every charge made upon me, I make my utmost opposition and best defence; by which means the first that should rout me, would disable me from ever rallying again. I have no after-game to play; on which side soever the inundation breaks my banks, I lie open, and am drowned without remedy. Epicurus says[2] that a wise man can never become a fool; and I have an opinion converse to this sentence, which is, that he who has once been a very fool, will never after be very wise. God gave me cold according to my cloth, and passions proportionable to the means I have to withstand them; nature having laid me open on the one side, has covered me on the other; having disarmed me of strength, she has armed me with insensibility, and an apprehension regular or dull.

[1] Livy, xii. 5. [2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

Now I cannot long endure (and when I was young much less endured) either coach, litter, or boat, and hate all other riding but on horseback, both in the city and country; but I can worse endure a litter than a coach, and, by the same reason, better a rough agitation upon the water, whence fear is produced, than the motion of a calm. At the little jerks of oars, stealing the vessel from under us, I find, I know not how, both my head and my stomach disordered; neither can I endure to sit upon a tottering stool. When the sail or the current carries us equally, or if we are towed, those equal agitations do not disturb me at all. 'Tis an interrupted motion that offends me, and most of all when most slow. I cannot otherwise express it. The physicians have ordered me to squeeze and gird myself about the bottom of my belly with a napkin, to remedy this accident; which however I have not tried, being accustomed to wrestle with my own defects, and to overcome them by myself.

Would my memory serve me, I should not think my time ill spent in setting down here the infinite variety that history presents us of the use of coaches in the service of war; various, according to the nations, and according to the ages; in my opinion of great necessity and effect; so that it is a wonder that we have lost all knowledge of them. I will only say this, that very lately, in our fathers' time, the Hungarians made very advantageous use of them against the Turks; having in every one of them a targetier and a musketeer, and a number of harquebusses, ranged along, loaded and ready, the whole protected by shield-work, like a galliot. They made the front of their battle with three thousand such coaches; and, after the cannon had played, made them all pour in their shot upon the enemy, and made them swallow that volley before they tasted of the rest, which was no slight instalment; and that done, these chariots charged into their squadrons to break them, and make way for the rest; besides the use they might make of them to flank their troops, in a place of danger marching in the field, or to cover a building and fortify

it in haste. In my time, a gentleman in one of our frontiers, unwieldy of body, and not being able to procure a horse able to carry his weight, having a quarrel, rode up and down in a chariot of this fashion, and found great convenience in it. But let us leave these chariots of war.

As if their insignificance had not been sufficiently known by better proofs, the last kings of our first race travelled in a chariot drawn by four oxen.[1] Mark Antony was the first at Rome that caused himself to be drawn in a coach by lions, and a singing wench with him.[2] Heliogabalus[3] did since as much, calling himself Cybele the mother of the gods; and was also drawn by tigers, taking upon him the person of the god Bacchus; he also sometimes harnessed two stags to his coach, another time four dogs, at another four naked wenches, causing himself to be drawn by them in pomp, he being stark naked too. The Emperor Firmus[4] caused his chariot to be drawn by ostriches of a prodigious size, so that it seemed rather to fly than roll.

The excessive expenses of monarchs a testimony of pusillanimity.

The strangeness of these inventions puts this other fancy in my head; that it is a kind of pusillanimity in monarchs, and a testimony that they do not themselves sufficiently understand what they are, when they study to make themselves honoured, and to appear great by excessive expense; it were excusable in a foreign country, where they are strangers, but amongst their own subjects, where they may do what they please, they derive from their dignity itself the most supreme degree of honour to which they can arrive; as, methinks, it is superfluous in a private gentleman to go finely dressed at home; his house, his attendance, and his kitchen, sufficiently answer for him. The advice that Isocrates[5] gave his king seems to be grounded upon reason: "that he should be splendid in plate and furniture, forasmuch as it is an expense of duration, that devolves to his successors, and that he should avoid

[1] See Eginhard, *Life of Charlemagne.*
[2] The comedian Cytheris. Plutarch, *Life of Antony.*—Cicero, *Philip.* ii. 24.
[3] Lampridius, *in Vitâ*, c. 28.
[4] Flav. Vopiscus, *in Vitâ*, c. 6.
[5] *Disc. to Nicocles.*

all magnificence that will, in a short time, be forgotten." I loved to go fine, when I was a younger brother, for want of other ornament, and it became me well; there are some upon whom rich clothes weep. We have strange stories of the frugality of our kings about their own persons, and in their gifts; kings that were great both in reputation, valour, and fortune. Demosthenes[1] mightily stickles against the law of the city, that assigned the public money for the pomp of their public plays and festivals; he would that their greatness should be seen in the number of ships well equipped, and good armies well provided for; and there is good reason to condemn Theophrastus,[2] who, in his Book of Riches, has laid down a contrary opinion, and maintains that sort of expense to be the true fruit of opulence; they are delights, says Aristotle,[3] that only please the lowest sort of the people; and that vanish from the memory so soon as they are sated with them, and for which no serious and judicious man can have any esteem.[4] This money would, in my opinion, be much more royally, as more profitably, justly, and durably, laid out in ports, harbours, walls, and fortifications; in sumptuous buildings, churches, hospitals, colleges; the regeneration of streets and roads, wherein Pope Gregory the Thirteenth will leave a laudable memory to future times; and wherein our Queen Catherine would, to all posterity, manifest her natural liberality and munificence, did her means equal her affection. Fortune has done me a great despite, in interrupting the noble structure of the Pont-Neuf of our great city, and depriving me of the hopes of seeing it finished before I die.

The public money, how it should be expended.

Moreover, it seems to the subjects, who are daily spectators of these triumphs, that their own riches are exposed before them, and that they are entertained at their own expense; for the people are apt to presume of kings, as we do of our servants, that they are to take care to provide us all things necessary, in abundance, but not to touch it themselves. And

1 *Third Olynthiac.*
2 It is Cicero who passes this criticism upon Theophrastus, *De Offic.* ii. 16.
3 Cicero, *De Offic.* ii. 16.
4 Id. *ib.* 17.

therefore the Emperor Galba, being pleased with a musician that played to him at supper, called for his cash-box, and gave him a handful of crowns that he took out of it, with these words: "This is not the public money, but my own."[1] And it so falls out that the people, for the most part, have reason on their side; and that their princes feed their eyes with what they once had to fill their bellies withal.

Whether liberality well becomes a king, and to what degree.

Liberality itself is not in its true lustre in a sovereign hand; private men have therein the most right; for, to take it exactly, a king has nothing properly his own; he owes even himself to others; authority is not given in favour of the magistrate, but of the people. A superior is never made so for his own profit, but for the profit of the inferior; a physician for the sick person, and not for himself; all magistracy, as well as all art, has its end out of itself: *Nulla ars in se versatur.*[2] "No art is comprehended within itself." Wherefore the governors of young princes, who make it their business to imprint in them this virtue of liberality, and to preach to them to deny nothing, and to think nothing so well spent as what they give, a doctrine that I have known in great credit in my time, either have more particular regard to their own profit than that of their master, or ill understand to whom they speak. It is too easy a thing to imprint liberality in him, who has as much as he will to supply it with, at the expense of others; and the estimate of it not being proportioned to the value of the gift, but to the wealth of him who bestows it, it comes to nothing in so mighty hands; they find themselves prodigal before they are reputed liberal; and yet it is but of little recommendation, in comparison of other royal virtues; and the only one, as the tyrant Dionysius said,[3] that suits well with tyranny itself. I should rather teach him this verse of the ancient labourer:[4]—

Τῇ χειρὶ δεῖ σπείρειν, ἀλλὰ μὴ ὅλῃ ἢ ὅλῳ τῷ θυλακῳ;

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ.*
[2] Cicero, *de Finib.* v. 6.
[3] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Kings.*
[4] Plutarch, *Whether the Athenians were more excellent in Arms than in Learning;* where Corinna makes use of it to convince Pindar that he had in one of his poems inserted too many fables.

"Whoever will have a good crop, must sow with his hand, and not pour out of the sack:" that he must disperse it abroad, and not lay it on a heap in one place; and that, as he has to give, or rather to pay and restore to so many people, according as they have deserved, he ought to be a faithful and discreet disposer. If the liberality of a prince be without measure or discretion, I had rather he were covetous.

Royal virtue seems most to consist in justice; and of all the parts of justice, that best denotes a king which accompanies liberality; because they have particularly reserved it to be performed by themselves, whereas all other sorts of justice they remit to the administration of others. An immoderate bounty is a very weak means to acquire them good-will, for it checks more people than it allures: *Quo in plures usus sis, minus in multos uti possis. . . . . Quid autem est stultius, quam quod libenter facias, curare ut id diutius facem non possis?*[1] "By how much more you exercise it to many, by so much less will you be in a capacity to do so to many more. And what greater folly can there be, than to order it so that what you would do willingly you cannot do long?" and if it be conferred without due respect of merit, it puts him out of countenance that receives it, and is received without grace. Tyrants have been sacrificed to the hatred of the people, by the hands of the very men they have unjustly advanced; such kind of men thinking to secure to themselves the possession of benefits unduly received, if they manifest to have him in hatred and disdain, of whom they hold them, and thus associate themselves to the common judgment and opinion.

Wherein royal virtue consists.

Tyrants hated by those that they have unjustly advanced.

The subjects of a prince profuse in gifts, grow unreasonable in asking, and accommodate themselves not to reason but example. We have, indeed, very often reason to blush at our own impudence; we are overpaid, according to justice,

[1] Cicero, *de Offic.* ii. 15.

when the recompense equals our service; for do we owe nothing of natural obligation to our princes? If he bears our charges, he does too much; 'tis enough that he contributes to them; the overplus is called benefit, which cannot be exacted, for the very name of liberality sounds of liberty. There is no end of it, as we use it; we never reckon what we have received; we care only for the future liberality;[1] wherefore, the more a prince exhausts himself in giving, the poorer he grows in friends. How should he satisfy desires, that still increase the more they are fulfilled? He who has his thoughts upon taking, never thinks of what he has taken; covetousness has nothing so much its own as ingratitude.

The example of Cyrus will not do amiss in this place, to serve the kings of these times for a touchstone to know whether their gifts are well or ill bestowed, and to see how much better that emperor conferred them than they do, who are reduced to borrow of their unknown subjects, and rather of them whom they have wronged, than of them on whom they have conferred their benefits, and so receive aids, wherein there is nothing of gratuitous but the name. Crœsus reproached him with his bounty, and cast up to how much his treasure would have amounted, if he had been a little closer-fisted. He had a mind to justify his liberality, and therefore sent dispatches into all parts, to the grandees of his dominions, whom he had particularly advanced, entreating every one of them to supply him with as much money as they could, for a pressing occasion, and to send him a particular of what every one could advance. When all the answers were brought to him, every one of his friends, not thinking it enough barely to offer him only so much as he had received from his bounty, having added to it a great deal of his own, it appeared that the sum amounted to much more than Crœsus's savings would. Whereupon Cyrus: "I am not," said he, "less fond of riches than other princes, but rather a

[1] So, one of our own wits defines gratitude to be "a lively sense of future favours."

better husband of them; you see with how small a venture I have acquired the inestimable treasure of so many friends; and how much more faithful treasurers they are to me, than mercenary men without obligation or affection would be; and my money better laid up than in chests, bringing upon me the hatred, envy, and contempt of other princes."[1]

The expenses of the emperors at the public spectacles, why not justifiable.

The emperors excused the superfluity of their plays and public spectacles, by the reason that their authority did, in some sort (at least in outward appearance), depend upon the will of the people of Rome, who, time out of mind, had been accustomed to be entertained and caressed with such shows and excesses. But they were private men who had nourished this custom, to gratify their fellow-citizens and companions, and chiefly out of their own purses, by such profusion and magnificence; it had quite another taste, when they were the masters who came to imitate it: *Pecuniarum translatio a justis dominis ad alienos non debet liberalis videri:*[2] "The transferring of money from the right owners to strangers, ought not to have the title of liberality." Philip, seeing his son sought by presents to gain the affection of the Macedonians, reprimanded him in a letter after this manner: "What! hast thou a mind that thy subjects look upon thee as their cashkeeper, and not as their king? Wilt thou tamper with them to win their affections? Do it then by the benefits of thy virtue, and not by those of thy chest."[3]

And yet it was doubtless a fine thing to bring and plant within the theatre a great number of vast trees, with all their branches in their full verdure, representing a great shady forest, disposed in excellent order; and the first day to throw into it a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, a thousand boars, and a thousand fallow-deer, to be killed and disposed of by the people; the next day, to cause a hundred great lions, a hundred leopards, and three hundred bears to be killed in their pres-

[1] Xenophon, *Cyrop.* viii. 9.
[2] Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 14
[3] Id. *ib.* ii. 15.

ence; and for the third day, to make three hundred pair of gladiators fight it out to the death, as the Emperor Probus did.[1]

Rich and sumptuous amphitheatres.

It was also very fine to see those vast amphitheatres, all faced with marble without, curiously wrought with figures and statues, and the inside sparkling with rare decorations and enrichments,—

Balteus[2] en gemmis, en illita porticus auro:[3]

"Behold a belt with jewels glorious made,
And a fine portico with gold o'erlaid:"

all the sides of this vast space were filled and environed, from the bottom to the top, with three or four score ranges of seats, all of marble also, and covered with cushions,—

Exeat, inquit,
Si pudor est, et de pulvino surgat equestri,
Cujus res legi non sufficit:"[4]

"Begone, your means suffice not law, he cries,
For shame, from off the noble cushion rise:"

where a hundred thousand men might sit at their ease; and the place below, where the plays were played, to make it by art first open and cleft into chinks, representing caves, that vomited out the beasts designed for the spectacle; and then, secondly, to be overflowed with a deep sea, full of sea-monsters, and covered with ships of war, to represent a naval battle; and, thirdly, to make it dry and even again, for the combats of the gladiators; and for the fourth scene, to have it strewed with vermilion and storax instead of sand, there to make a solemn feast for all that infinite number of people, the last act of one single day.

Quoties nos descendentis arenæ
Vidimus in partes, ruptâque voragine terræ

[1] Vopiscus, *in Vitâ*. c. 19.

[2] "I know not," says Mr. Coste, "what is strictly to be understood here by the word *balteus*. In the amphitheatres this term was applied to certain steps that were higher and wider than the others, as may be seen in the Antiquities of Father Montfauçon, tom. iii. part ii. p. 256. Father Tachart, in his Latin and French Dictionary, says that the word is used by Vitruvius to denote a belt or girdle round the bottom and top of a column. Whether jewels would make a better figure there than on Montfauçon's steps, I leave to the determination of the connoisseurs."

[3] Calpurnius, *Eclog*. 7, entitled *Templum*, verse 47.

[4] Juvenal, iii. 153.

Emersisse feras, et iisdem sæpe latebris,
Aurea cum croceo creverunt arbuta libro! . . .
Nec solum nobis silvestria cernere monstra
Contigit; æquoreos ego cum certantibus ursis
Spectavi vitulos, et equorum nomine dignum,
Sed deforme pecus.[1]

"How often, when spectators, have we seen
Part of the spacious theatre sink in,
And, from a sudden chasm in the earth,
Start up wild beasts: then presently give birth
Unto a shining grove of golden bow'rs,
Of shrubs that blossom'd with enamell'd flow'rs?
Nor yet of sylvan monsters had we sight
Alone; I saw sea-calves with wild bears fight;
And a deformed sort of cattle came,
Which river or sea-horses we might name."

Sometimes they made a high mountain rise, full of fruit and other trees in full fruit and foliage, sending down rivulets of water from the top, as from the mouth of a fountain; other whiles a great ship was seen to come rolling in, which opened and divided of itself; and, after having disgorged from the hold four or five hundred beasts for fight, closed again, and vanished without help; at other times, from the floor of this place they made spouts of perfumed waters dart their streams upward, and so high as to besprinkle all that infinite multitude. To defend themselves from the injuries of the weather, they had that vast place one while covered over with purple curtains of needle-work, and by and by with silk of sometimes one sometimes another colour, which they could draw off or on in a moment, as they had a mind:—

Quamvis non modico caleant spectacula sole,
Vela reducuntur, cum venit Hermogenes.[2]

"The curtains, tho' the sun does scorch the skin,
Are, when Hermogenes appears, drawn in."

The network also that was set before the people, to defend them from the violence of these turned-out beasts, was interwoven with gold.

[1] Calpurnius, Eclog. 7, verse 64.

[2] Martial, xii. 29, 15. This Hermogenes was a notorious thief.

Auro quoque torta refulgent
Retia.[1]

"And woven nets refulgent are with gold."

If there be anything excusable in such excesses as these, it is where the novelty and invention create the wonder and admiration, not the expense; even in these vanities we discover how fertile those ages were in other kind of wits than these of ours. It is with this sort of fertility as with other products of nature; it is not to say she there employed her utmost force; we do not go, we rather wander up and down, this way and that; we turn back the road we came. I am afraid our knowledge is weak in every way; we neither see far forward nor backward; our understanding comprehends little, and lives but a little while; 'tis short, both in extent of time and extent of matter:—

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
Multi, sed omnes illachrymabiles,
Urgentur, ignotique longâ
Nocte.[2]

"Before Atrides, brave in fight,
Reigned many kings: but endless night
To all denies our tears and praise,
For never were they graced with lays."

Et supera bellum Thebanum, et funera Trojæ,
Multi alias alii quoque res cecinere poetæ:[3]

"And long before the wars of Thebes and Troy
On other things bards did their song employ:"

and the narrative of Solon,[4] of what he had got out of the Egyptian priests, touching the long life of their state, and their manner of learning and preserving foreign histories, is not, methinks, a testimony to be slighted in this consideration. *Si interminatam in omnes partes magnitudinem regionum videremus*, et temporum, *in quam se injiciens animus et intendens, ita latè longeque peregrinatur, ut nullam oram ultimi videat, in qua possit insistere: in hac immensitate . . . infinita*

[1] Calpurnius, Eclog. 7, 53.
[2] Horace, *Od.* iv. 9, 25.
[3] Lucret. v. 327. Montaigne here gives Lucretius's words a construction directly contrary to what they bear in the poem.
[4] Plato, *Timæus*.

vis innumerabilium appareret formarum.[1] "Could we see that boundless extent of countries and ages, in all their parts, on which the mind, being fixed and intent, might ramble where and when it list, without meeting with any limits to its sight, we should discover innumerable forms in that immensity." Though all that has arrived at our knowledge of times past should be true, and known by any one, it would be less than nothing in comparison of what is unknown. And of this same image of the world, which glides on whilst we are in it, how wretched and narrow is the knowledge of the most curious? Not only of particular events, which fortune often renders exemplary and of great concern, but of the state of great governments and nations, an hundred more things escape us than ever come to our knowledge; we make a mighty business of the invention of artillery and printing, which other men at the other end of the world, in China, had a thousand years ago. Did we but see as much of the world as we do not, we should perceive, it is to be supposed, a perpetual multiplication and vicissitude of forms. There is nothing singular and rare in respect of nature, but in respect of our knowledge; which is a wretched foundation whereon to ground our rules, and that represents to us a very false image of things. As we nowadays vainly conclude the declension and decrepitude of the world by the arguments we extract from our own weakness and decay:—

Printing in China.

Jamque adeo est affecta ætas, effœtaque tellus:[2]

"So much the age, so much the earth decays:"

so did he[3] vainly conclude the birth and youth of theirs by the vigour they observed in the wits of their time, abounding in novelties and the invention of divers arts:—

[1] Cic. *de Naturâ Deorum*, i. 20. Here also Montaigne puts a sense quite different from what the words bear in the original; but the application he makes of them is so happy that one would declare they were actually put together only to express his own sentiment. "Et temporum" is an addition by Montaigne; and, instead of "infinita vis innumerabilium appareret formarum," it is in Cicero "infinita vis innumerabilium volitat atomorum." These two last are sufficient to show that Cicero treats of quite another thing than what Montaigne does here.

[2] Lucret. ii. 1151.

[3] *Lucretius*, in his poem.

Verum, ut opinor, habet novitatem summa, recensque
Natura est mundi, neque pridem exordia cepit:
Quare etiam quædam nunc artes expoliuntur,
Nunc etiam augescunt; nunc addita navigiis sunt
Multa.[1]

"But sure the nature of the world is strong,
Perfect, and young; nor can I think it long
Since it beginning took, because we know
Arts still increase, and still politer grow,
And many things, from former times concealed,
Are now, by means of ships, to us revealed."

Of the new world, and the genius of its inhabitants, when it was first discovered.

Our world has lately discovered another (and who will assure us it is the last of his brothers, since the demons, the sibyls, and we ourselves, have been ignorant of this till now?) as large, well peopled, and fruitful as this whereon we live, and yet so raw and childish, that we yet teach it its *a, b, c;* 'tis not above fifty years since it knew neither letters, weights, measures, vestments, corn, nor vines; it was then quite naked, in the mother's lap, and only lived upon what she gave it. If we rightly conclude of our end, and this poet of the youthfulness of that age of his, that other world will only enter into the light when this of ours shall make its exit; the universe will be paralytic; one member will be useless, another in vigour. I am greatly afraid that we have very much precipitated its declension and ruin by our contagion, and that we have sold it our opinions and our arts at a very dear rate. It was an infant world, and yet we have not whipped and subjected it to our discipline by the advantage of our valour and natural forces; neither have we won it by our justice and goodness, nor subdued it by our magnanimity. Most of their answers, and the negotiations we have had with them, witness that they were nothing behind us in pertinency and clearness of natural understanding; the astonishing magnificence of the cities of Cusco and Mexico, and, amongst many other such like things, the garden of that king, where all the trees, fruits, and plants, according to the order and stature they have in a garden,

[1] Lucret. v. 331.

were excellently formed in gold, as in his cabinet were all the animals bred upon the land and the sea of his dominions; and the beauty of their manufactures, in jewels, feathers, cotton, and painting, gave ample proof that they were as little inferior to us in industry. But as to devotion, observance of the laws, goodness, liberality, and plain dealing, it was of main use to us that we had not so much as they; for they have lost, sold, and betrayed themselves by this advantage.

As to boldness and courage, stability, constancy against pain, hunger, and death, I should not fear to oppose the examples I find amongst them, to the most famous examples of elder times, that we find in our records on this side of the world. For as to those who have subdued them, take but away the sleights and artifices they practised to deceive them, and the just astonishment it was to those nations to see so sudden and unexpected an arrival of men with beards, differing in language, religion, shape, and countenance, from so remote a part of the world, and where they had never heard there was any habitation, mounted upon great unknown monsters, against those who had never so much as seen a horse, or any other beast, trained up to carry a man or any other loading; shelled in a hard and shining skin, with a cutting and glittering weapon in his hand against them, who, for the wonder of the brightness of a looking-glass or a knife, would truck great treasures of gold and pearl; and who had neither knowledge nor matter with which, even at leisure, they could penetrate our steel; to which may be added the lightning and thunder of our pieces and arquebusses, enough to frighten Cæsar himself, if surprised with as little experience of them; against people naked, except where the invention of a little quilted cotton was in use; without other arms, at the most, than bows, stones, staves, and bucklers of wood; people surprised, under colour of friendship and good faith, by the curiosity of seeing strange and unknown things; take but away, I say, this disparity from the conquerors, and you take away all the occasion of so many victories. When I

look upon that invincible ardour wherewith so many thousands of men, women, and children have so often presented, and thrown themselves into inevitable dangers, for the defence of their gods and liberties; that generous obstinacy, to suffer all extremities and difficulties, and death itself, rather than submit to the dominion of those by whom they had been so shamefully abused; and some of them choosing rather to die of hunger and fasting than to accept of nourishment from the hands of their so basely victorious enemies; I take it that whoever would have attacked them upon equal terms of arms, experience, and number, would have had as hard, and perhaps a harder, game to play, than in any other war we have seen.

Why did not so noble a conquest fall under Alexander, or the ancient Greeks and Romans; and so great a revolution and change of so many empires and nations fall into hands that might have gently made plain and smooth whatever was rough and savage amongst them, and have cherished and assisted the good seeds that nature had there produced; mixing not only with the culture of land and the ornament of cities, the arts of this part of the world, in what was necessary, but also the Greek and Roman virtues, with those that were originals of the country! What a particular reparation had it been to them, and what a general good to the whole world, had our first examples and deportment in those parts allured those people to the admiration and imitation of virtue, and had begot betwixt them and us a fraternal society and intelligence! How easy had it been to have made advantage of souls so innocent, and so eager to learn; having for the most part naturally so good capacities! Whereas, on the contrary, we have taken advantage of their ignorance and inexperience, with the greater ease to incline them to treachery, luxury, avarice, and towards all sorts of inhumanity and cruelty, by the pattern and example of our manners; whoever put at so high a price the benefit of merchandise and traffic? So many cities levelled with the ground, so many nations exterminated, so many millions of people fallen by the edge of the

sword, and the richest and most beautiful part of the world turned upside-down for the traffic of pearls and pepper. Mechanical victories! Never did ambition, never did political animosities engage men against one another, in such horrible hostilities and calamities.

Certain Spaniards, coasting the sea in quest of their mines, landed in a fruitful and pleasant and very well-peopled country, and there made their usual representations to the inhabitants: "That they were peaceable men, who were come from a very remote country, and sent on the part of the King of Castile, the greatest prince of the habitable world, to whom the Pope, God's vicegerent upon earth, had given the principality of the Indies; that if they would become tributaries to him, they should be very gently and courteously used:" at the same time requiring of them victuals for their nourishment, and gold, whereof to make some pretended medicine; they moreover represented to them the belief of one only God, and the truth of our religion, which they advised them to embrace, to which they also added some threats. To which they received this answer: "That as to their being peaceable, they did not seem to be such, if they were so; as to their king, he must be necessitous and poor, since he asked; and he who had given him that grant, a man that loved dissension, to give away that to another which was none of his own, and to bring it into dispute against the ancient possessors; as to victuals, they would supply them; that of gold they had little, it being a thing they had in very small esteem, as being of no use to the service of life, their care being only to pass it happily and pleasantly; but that what they could find, except what was employed in the service of their gods, they might freely take; as to one only God, the notion had pleased them, but that they would not change their religion, because they had so happily lived in it, and that they were not used to take advice of any but their friends, and those they knew; as to their menaces, it was a sign of want of judgment, to threaten those whose nature and power was to

them unknown; that therefore they had better make haste to quit their coast, for they were not used to take such civilities and remonstrances of armed men and strangers in good part; otherwise they would do by them as they had done by those others," showing them the heads of several executed men round the wall of their city. Here is one specimen of the prattle of this infancy. But so it is, that the Spaniards did, neither in this nor several other places where they did not find the merchandise they sought for, make any stay or any attempt, whatever other conveniences were there to be had; witness my Cannibals.[1]

Of two of the most puissant monarchs of that world, and perhaps of this, kings of so many kings, and the last they exterminated, that of Peru,[2] having been taken in a battle, and put to so excessive a ransom as exceeds all belief; it being faithfully paid, and he having, by his conversation, given manifest signs of a frank, liberal, and constant spirit, and of a clear and settled understanding; the conquerors, after having exacted one million three hundred and twenty-five thousand five hundred weight of gold, besides silver and other things, which amounted to no less (so that their horses were thenceforth shod with massy gold) had yet a mind to see, at the price of what disloyalty and injustice soever, what the remainder of the treasure of this king might be, and to possess themselves of that also. To which end a false accusation was exhibited against him, and false witnesses brought in to prove that he planned to raise an insurrection in his provinces, to procure his own liberty; whereupon, by the worthy sentence of those very men, who had by this treachery conspired his ruin, he was condemned to be publicly hanged, after having made him buy off the torment of being burned alive, by the baptism they gave him immediately before execution; a horrid and unheard-of barbarity, which nevertheless he underwent without belying himself either in word or look, with a truly grave and royal behaviour. After

[1] See Book i. c. 30.

[2] *Atahualpa.*

which, to calm and appease the people, daunted and astonished at so strange a thing, they counterfeited great sorrow for his death, and appointed most sumptuous funerals.

The other, king of Mexico,[1] after having a long time defended his beleaguered city, and in this siege manifested the utmost of what suffering and perseverance can do, if ever prince and people did, and his misfortune having delivered him alive into his enemies' hands, upon articles of being treated like a king; neither did he in his captivity discover anything unworthy of that title. His enemies, after their victory, not finding so much gold as they expected, when they had searched and rifled with their utmost diligence, they went about to procure discoveries by the most cruel torments they could invent, upon the prisoners they had taken; but having profited nothing that way, their courage being greater than their torments, they arrived at last to such a degree of fury as, contrary to their faith and the law of nations, to condemn the king himself and one of the principal noblemen of his court to the rack, in the presence of one another. This lord, finding himself overcome with pain, being environed with burning coals, pitifully turned his dying eyes towards his master, as it were to ask him pardon that he was able to endure no more; whereupon the king, darting at him a fierce and severe look, as reproaching his cowardice and pusillanimity, with a stern and firm voice said to him this only: "Am I in a bath? am I more at my ease than thou?" The other soon after quailed under the torment, and died upon the place. The king, half roasted, was carried thence; not so much out of pity (for what compassion ever touched such barbarous souls, who, for the doubtful information of some vessel of gold to be made a prey of, caused not only a man, but a king, so great in fortune and desert, to be broiled before their eyes), but because his endurance rendered their cruelty still more shameful. They afterwards hanged him, for having nobly attempted to deliver

[1] *Guatimozin.*

himself by arms from so long a captivity, and he died with a courage becoming so magnanimous a prince.

Indian prisoners burnt alive by the Spaniards.

Another time they burned, in one and the same fire, four hundred and sixty men alive at once; the four hundred being of the common people, the sixty the principal lords of a province, mere prisoners of war. We have these narratives from themselves; for they do not only own it, but boast of it and inculcate it. Could it be for a testimony of their justice, or their zeal to religion? Doubtless these are ways too differing and contrary to so holy an end. Had they proposed to themselves to extend our faith, they would have considered that it does not amplify in the possession of territories, but in the gaining of men; and would have more than satisfied themselves with the slaughters occasioned by the necessity of war, without indifferently mixing a massacre, as upon wild beasts, as universal as fire and sword could make it; having only, by their good-will, saved so many as they intended to make miserable slaves of, for the work and service of their mines; so that many of the captains were put to death upon their place of conquest, by order of the King of Castile, justly offended with the horror of their conduct, and almost all of them hated and disesteemed. God did meritoriously permit that all this great plunder should be swallowed by the sea in transportation, or by civil wars, wherewith they devoured one another, and the most of the actors in it were buried upon the place, without any fruit of their victory.

That the revenue, though in the hands of so parsimonious and so prudent a prince,[1] so little answers the expectation given to his predecessors of it, and of that first abundance of riches which was found at the first landing in those new discovered countries (for though a great deal be fetched thence, yet we see 'tis nothing in comparison of what might be expected), comes from this, that the use of money was there utterly unknown, and that consequently their gold was

[1] Philip II.

found all collected together, being of no other use but for ornament and show; as furniture reserved from father to son by many puissant kings, who always drained their mines to make this vast heap of vessels and statues, for the decoration of their palaces and temples; whereas our gold is always in motion and traffic; we cut ours into a thousand small pieces, and cast it into a thousand forms, and scatter and disperse it a thousand ways. Only suppose our kings should thus hoard up all the gold they could get in several ages, and let it lie idle by them.

Those of the kingdom of Mexico were in some sort more civilized and more ingenious than the other nations were in those parts; therefore did they judge, as we do, that the world was near its period, and looked upon the desolation we brought amongst them for a certain sign of it. They believed that the existence of the world was divided into five ages, and into the life of five successive suns, of which four had already ended their time, and that which gave them light was the fifth. The first perished, with all other creatures, by an universal inundation of water; the second, by the heavens falling upon us, which suffocated every living thing; to which age they assign the giants, and showed bones to the Spaniards, according to the proportions of which, the stature of men amounted to twenty hands high; the third by fire, which burnt and consumed all; the fourth, by an emotion of the air and wind, which came with such violence as beat down even many mountains; wherein the men died not, but were turned into baboons; what impressions will not the weakness of human belief admit! After the death of this fourth sun, the world was twenty-five years in perpetual darkness; in the fifteenth of which a man and a woman were created, that restored the human race; ten years after, upon a certain day, the sun appeared newly created, and since, the account of their years takes beginning from that day; the third day after his creation, the ancient gods died; and the new ones are since born

The opinions of the Mexicans.

from day to day. After what manner they think this last sun shall perish, my author knows not; but their number of this fourth change agrees with the great conjunction of stars, that eight hundred and odd years ago, as astrologers suppose, produced great alterations and novelties in the world.

The magnificent causeway betwixt Quito and Cusco.

As to pomp and magnificence, in relation to which I engaged in this discourse, neither Greece, Rome, nor Egypt, whether for utility, difficulty, or state, can compare any of their works with the road to be seen in Peru, made by the kings of the country, from the city of Quito to that of Cusco (three hundred leagues), straight, even, five-and-twenty paces wide, paved, and inclosed on both sides with high and beautiful walls, and along these, on the inside, two clear rivulets, bordered with a beautiful sort of a tree, which they call *molly*. In which work, where they met with rocks and mountains, they cut them through and made them even, and filled up pits and valleys with lime and stone to make them level. At the end of every day's journey are beautiful palaces, furnished with provisions, vestments, and arms, as well for travellers as for the armies that are to pass that way. In the estimate of this work I have reckoned the difficulty, which is particularly considerable in that place; they did not build with any stones less than ten feet square; and had no other means of carriage than by drawing their load themselves by force of arm, and knew not so much as the art of scaffolding, nor any other way of standing to their work but by throwing up earth against the building, as it rose higher, taking it away again when they had done it.

The last king of Peru carried in a chair of gold to the midst of the field of battle.

Let us return to our coaches. In their place, and that of all other sorts of carriage, these people caused themselves to be carried by men, and upon their shoulders. This last king of Peru, the day that he was taken, was thus carried upon staves of gold, sitting in a chair of gold in the middle of his battle. As many of his chairmen as were killed, to make

him fall (for they wanted to take him alive), as many others took their place, so that they could never beat him down, what slaughter soever they made of those people, till a horseman, seizing upon him, brought him down.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE INCONVENIENCE OF GREATNESS.

SINCE we cannot attain to greatness, let us revenge ourselves by railing at it; and yet it is not absolutely railing against anything to proclaim its defects, because they are to be found in all things, how beautiful or how much soever to be coveted. Greatness has in general this manifest advantage, that it can grow less when it pleases, and has very near the choice of both the one and the other condition, for a man does not fall from every height; there are several from which one may descend without falling. It does, indeed, appear to me that we value it at too high a rate, and also overvalue the resolution of those who, we have either seen or heard, have contemned it, or displaced themselves of their own accord; its essence is not so evidently commodious that a man may not, without a miracle, refuse it. I find it a very hard thing to undergo misfortunes, but to be content with a competent measure of fortune, and to avoid greatness, I think a very easy matter; 'tis methinks a virtue to which I, who am none of the wisest, could without any great endeavour arrive. What then is to be expected from them that would yet put into consideration the glory attending this refusal, wherein there may lurk worse ambition than even in the desire itself and fruition of greatness? Forasmuch as ambition never

behaves itself better, according to itself, than when it proceeds by obscure and unfrequented ways.

Montaigne was never ambitious of very high preferment.

I incite my courage to patience, but I rein it in as much as I can from desire. I have as much to wish for as another, and allow my wishes as much liberty and indiscretion; but yet it never befell me to wish for either empire or royalty, or the eminence of high and commanding fortunes; I do not aim that way; I love myself too well. When I think of growing greater, 'tis but very moderately; and by a compelled and timorous advancement, such as is proper for me, in resolution, in prudence, in health, in beauty, and even in riches too; but supreme place, or mighty authority, oppresses my imagination, and quite contrary to the other,[1] I should perhaps rather choose to be the second or third in Perigord, than the first at Paris; at least, without lying, the third at Paris than the first. I would neither dispute, a miserable unknown, with a nobleman's porter, nor make crowds open in adoration as I pass. I am trained up to a moderate condition, as well by my choice as by fortune; and have made it appear, in the whole conduct of my life and enterprises, that I have rather avoided, than otherwise, the climbing above the degree of fortune in which God placed me by my birth; all natural constitution is equally just and easy. My soul is so sneaking and mean, that I measure not good fortune by its height, but by its facility.

But if my heart be not great enough, 'tis, on the other hand, open enough to make amends, by freely laying open its weakness. Should any one put me upon comparing the life of L. Thorius Balbus, a brave man, handsome, learned, healthful, understanding, and abounding in all sorts of conveniences and pleasures, leading a quiet life, and all his own, his mind well prepared against death, superstition, pains, and other incumbrances of human necessity; dying at last in battle with his sword in his hand, for the defence of his country,

[1] *Julius Cæsar.* See Plutarch, *in Vitâ.*

on the one part; and on the other part, the life of M. Regulus, so great and high as it is known to every one, and his end admirable; the one without name and without dignity, the other exemplary and glorious to a wonder; I should doubtless say what Cicero did, could I speak as well as he.[1] But if I had to decide them with reference to myself, I should then say that the first is as much according to my capacity and desire, which I conform to my capacity, as the second is far beyond it; that I could not approach the last but with veneration; the other I would readily attain by custom.

Montaigne loved not to command, nor be commanded.

But let us return to our temporal greatness, from which we are digressed. I disrelish all dominion, whether active or passive. Otanes, one of the seven who had right to pretend to the kingdom of Persia, did as I should readily have done; which was that he gave up to his competitors his right of being promoted to it, either by election or lot, provided that he and his might live in the empire free from all authority and subjection, that of the ancient laws excepted, and might enjoy all liberty that was not prejudicial to these; as impatient of commanding as of being commanded.[2]

That it is a troublesome and difficult employment to command.

The most painful and difficult employment in the world, in my opinion, is worthily to discharge the office of a king. I excuse more of their mistakes than men commonly do, in consideration of the intolerable weight of their function, which astonishes me; 'tis hard to keep measure in so immeasurable a power; yet so it is, that, even in those who are of the least excellent nature, it is a singular incitement to virtue to be seated in a place where you cannot do the least good that shall not be put upon

[1] Cicero, from whom Montaigne has taken this parallel, plainly gives the preference to Regulus. Thorius, he says, wallowed in pleasures of every kind, and was a contemner of the sacrifices and temples of his country; he was a handsome man, perfectly healthy, and so valiant that he died in battle for the cause of the republic; insomuch, adds Cicero, that I dare not name the man who was preferable to him; but virtue shall speak for me, who will not hesitate a moment to give M. Regulus the preference, and to proclaim him the more happy man. *De Finib.* ii. 20.

[2] Herod. iii. 82

record; where the least benefit goes to so many men, and where your talent, like that of preachers, principally addresses itself to the people, no very exact judge, easy to be deceived, and easily content. There are few things wherein we can give a sincere judgment, by reason that there are few wherein we have not in some sort a particular interest. Superiority and inferiority, dominion and subjection, are bound to a natural envy and contest, and must necessarily perpetually encroach upon one another. I believe neither the one nor the other touching the rights of the adverse party; let reason therefore, which is inflexible and without passion, determine. 'Tis not above a month ago that I read two Scotch authors contending upon this subject, of which he who stands for the people makes kings to be in a worse condition than a carter; and he who writes for monarchy places them some degrees above God Almighty in power and sovereignty.

The inconvenience of greatness.

Now the inconvenience of greatness, that I have made choice of to consider in this place, upon some occasion that has lately put it into my head, is this. There is not, perhaps, anything more pleasant in the commerce of men than the trials that we make against one another, out of emulation of honour and valour, whether in the exercises of the body or in those of the mind; yet herein the sovereign greatness can have no true part. And, indeed, I have often thought that, through mere force of respect, men have used princes disdainfully and injuriously in that particular; for the thing I was infinitely offended at in my childhood, that they who exercised with me forbore to do their best, because they found me unworthy of their utmost endeavour, is what we see happen to them every day, every one finding himself unworthy to contend with them; if we discover that they have the least passion to have the better, there is no one who will not make it his business to give it them, and who will not rather betray his own glory than offend theirs, and will therein employ so much force only as is necessary to advance their honour. What share have they,

then, in the engagement, wherein every one is on their side? Methinks, in such cases, I see those Paladins of ancient times presenting themselves to jousts, with enchanted arms and bodies. Crison running against Alexander, purposely missed his blow, and made a fault in his career;[1] Alexander chid him for it, but he ought to have had him whipped. Upon this consideration Carneades said,[2] that "The sons of princes learned nothing right but to ride; by reason that in all their other exercises every one bends and yields to them; but a horse, that is neither a flatterer nor a courtier, throws the son of a king with as little ceremony as he would that of a porter."

Homer was compelled to consent that Venus, so sweet and delicate as she was, should be wounded at the battle of Troy, thereby to ascribe courage and boldness to her; qualities that cannot possibly be in those who are exempt from danger. The gods are made to be angry, to fear, to run away, to be jealous, to grieve, and to be transported with passion, to honour them with the virtues that amongst us are built upon these imperfections. He who does not participate in the hazard and difficulty, can pretend to no interest in the honour and pleasure that are the result of hazardous actions. 'Tis pity a man should be so potent that all things must give way to him; fortune therein sets you too remote from society, and places you in too great a solitude. This easiness and mean facility of making all things bow before you, is an enemy to all sorts of pleasure; this is to slide, not to go; to sleep, not to live. Conceive man accompanied with omnipotence, you throw him into an abyss; he must beg disturbance and opposition as an alms; his being and his good is indigence. Their good qualities are dead and lost; for these are not perceived but by comparison, and we put them out of it; they have little knowledge of true praise, having their ears stunned with so continual and uniform an approbation. Have they to do

[1] Plutarch, *On Contentment or Repose of the Spirit*, c. 12.

[2] Plutarch, *On the Difference between a Flatterer and a Friend*, c. 15.

with the most foolish of all their subjects? They have no means to take any advantage of him; if he but say, "'Twas because he is my king," he thinks he has said enough to express that he therefore suffered himself to be overcome. This quality stifles and consumes the other true and essential qualities; they are buried under royalty, and leave them nothing to recommend themselves withal, but actions that directly concern it, and that merely respect the functions of their place; 'tis so much to be a king, that he only is so by being so. The strange lustre that surrounds him conceals and shrouds him from us; our sight is there broken and dissipated, being stopped and filled by this prevailing light. The senate awarded the prize of eloquence to Tiberius; he refused it, holding that, though it had been just, he could derive no advantage from a judgment so partial, and that was so little free to decide.

The prize of eloquence refused by Tiberius, and why.

As we give them all advantages of honour, so do we soothe and authorize all their vices and defects, not only by approbation, but by imitation also. Every one of Alexander's followers carried their heads awry as he did;[1] and the flatterers of Dionysius run against one another in his presence, stumbled at and overturned whatever was under foot, to make out they were as shortsighted as he.[2] Hernia has sometimes also served to recommend a man to favour; I have seen deafness affected; and because the master hated his wife, Plutarch[3] has seen his courtiers repudiate theirs, whom they loved; and, which is yet more, uncleanness and all manner of dissoluteness has been in fashion; as also disloyalty, blasphemy, cruelty, heresy, superstition, irreligion, effeminacy, and worse, if worse there be; and by an example yet more dangerous than that of Mithridates's flatterers, who, because their master pretended to the honour of a good physician, came to him to have incisions and cauteries made in their

[1] Plutarch, *On the Difference between the Flatterer and the Friend.*

[2] Id. *ib.*

[3] Id. *ib.*, who only says that he knew a man who, because his friend divorced his wife, turned away his wife also, whom, nevertheless, he went to visit, and sent for sometimes privately to his house, which was discovered by the very wife of his friend.

limbs;[1] for these others suffered the soul, a more delicate and noble part, to be cauterized. But to end where I began; the Emperor Adrian disputing with the philosopher Favorinus about the interpretation of some word, Favorinus soon yielded him the victory; for which his friends rebuking him; "You talk simply," said he;[2] "would you not have him wiser than I, who commands thirty legions?" Augustus wrote verses against Asinius Pollio: "And I," said Pollio,[3] "say nothing; for it is not prudent to write in contest with him who has power to proscribe." And he was in the right; for Dionysius, because he could not equal Philoxenus in poetry,[4] and Plato in discourse, condemned one to the quarries,[5] and sent the other to be sold for a slave in the island of Ægina.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

The end of punishments, and how the vices of some men may serve for instruction to others.

'Tis a custom of our justice to condemn some for a warning to others. To condemn them for having done amiss were folly, as Plato says,[6] for what is done can never be undone; but 'tis that they may offend no more, and that others may avoid the example of their offence; we do not correct the man we

1 Plutarch, *On the Difference between the Flatterer and the Friend.*

2 Spartian, *Life of Adrian*, c. 15.

3 Macrobius, *Saturnal.* ii. 4.

4 Or rather because he was not able to bear the slight opinion which Philoxenus showed of his poetry. Diodorus of Sicily, xv. 6, says, that one day, at supper-time, as they were reading some worthless poems of this tyrant, that excellent poet Philoxenus, being charged to give his opinion of them, was too free in his answer to please Dionysius, for which the tyrant was so much incensed against him that he ordered him to be sent immediately to the quarries.

5 Montaigne and his authority Plutarch (*On Contentment of Mind*) are mistaken here with regard to Plato, who was sold a slave in the island of Ægina, by order of Dyonysius the tyrant, because he had spoken too freely to him; as Diodorus of Sicily says positively, xv. cap. 2, and more particularly also Diog. Laert. *Life of Plato.*

6 *Laws*, xi.

hang; we correct others by him. I do the same; my errors are sometimes natural and incorrigible; but the good which virtuous men do the public in making themselves imitated, I perhaps may do in making my manners avoided;—

> Nonne vides Albi ut male vivat filius? utque
> Barrus inops? magnum documentum, ne patriam rem
> Perdere quis velit;[1]

> "Behold the son
> Of Albus there, and Barrus, too, undone!
> A striking lesson is the spendthrift's fate,
> To caution youth from squandering their estate;"

while I publish and accuse my own imperfections, somebody will learn to be afraid of them. The parts that I most esteem in myself derive more honour from decrying, than from commending my own manners; which is the reason why I so often fall into and so much insist upon that strain. But, when all is summed up, a man never speaks of himself without loss. A man's accusations of himself are always believed; his praises never. There may be some of my complexion, who better instruct me by contrariety than similitude, and more by avoiding than imitating; the elder Cato had a regard to this sort of discipline, when he said that "the wise may learn more of fools than fools of the wise;"[2] and Pausanias tells us of an ancient player upon the lyre, who used to make his scholars go to hear one that lived over against him, and played very ill, that they might learn to hate his discords and false measures. The horror of cruelty more inclines me to clemency than any example of clemency could do; a good rider does not so much mend my seat as an attorney or a Venetian on horseback; and a clownish way of speaking does more to reform mine than the most elegant. Every day the foolish countenance of another is advertising and advising me; that which pricks, rouses and incites, much better than that which tickles. The present time is fitting to reform us backward; more by dissenting than agreeing, by differing

[1] Horace, *Sat.* i. 4, 109.

[2] Plutarch, *in Vitâ.*

than consenting. Profiting little by good examples, I make use of those that are ill, which are everywhere to be found; I endeavour to render myself as agreeable as I see others offensive; as constant as I see others fickle; as affable as I see others rough; and as good as I see others evil; but I proposed to myself impracticable measures.

The most fruitful and natural exercise of the mind, in my opinion, is conversation; I find the use of it more sweet than of any other action of life; and for that reason it is that, if I were now compelled to choose, I should sooner, I think, consent to lose my sight than my hearing and speech. The Athenians, and also the Romans, kept this exercise in great honour in their academies; the Italians retain some footsteps of it to this day, to their great advantage, as is manifest by the comparison of our understandings with theirs. The study of books is a languishing and feeble motion, that heats not, whereas conversation teaches and exercises at once. If I converse with a man of mind, and no flincher, who presses hard upon and digs at me right and left, his imagination raises up mine; jealousy, glory, and contention stimulate and raise me up to something above myself; unison is a quality altogether obnoxious in conversation, but as our minds fortify themselves by the communication of vigorous and regular understandings, 'tis not to be expressed how much they lose and degenerate by the continual commerce and frequentation we have with those that are mean and sickly; there is no contagion that spreads like that; I know sufficiently by experience what 'tis worth a yard. I love to discourse and dispute; but it is with but few men, and for myself; for to do it as a spectacle and entertainment to great persons, and to make a parade of a man's wit and power of talking is, in my opinion, very unbecoming a man of honour.

Conversation of greater advantage than the reading of books.

Folly is a scurvy quality; but not to be able to endure it, to fret and vex at it as I do, is another sort of disease, little inferior in troublesomeness to folly itself; and this is what I

would now accuse in myself. I enter into conversation and dispute with great liberty and ease, forasmuch as opinion meets in me with a soil very unfit for penetration, or taking any deep root; no propositions astonish me, no belief offends me, though never so contrary to my own; there is no fancy so frivolous and extravagant that does not seem to me a suitable product of the human mind. We, who deprive our judgments of the right of determining, look calmly at adverse opinions, and if we incline not our judgments to them, yet we easily give them the hearing. Where one scale is totally empty, I let the other waver under old wives' dreams; and I think myself excusable, if I rather choose the odd number, Thursday rather than Friday; and if I had rather be twelfth or fourteenth than thirteenth at table; if I had rather on a journey see a hare run by me than cross my way; and rather give my man my left foot than my right, when he comes to dress me. All such whimsies as are in use amongst us deserve at least to be hearkened unto; for my part, they only with me import inanity, but they import that. Moreover, vulgar and casual opinions are something more than nothing in nature; and he who will not suffer himself to proceed so far, perhaps falls into the vice of obstinacy, to avoid that of superstition.

The contradictions of judgments, then, do neither offend nor alter, they only rouse and exercise me. We evade correction, whereas we ought to offer and present ourselves to it, especially when it appears in the form of conversation, and not of dictation. At every opposition we do not consider whether or no it be just, but, right or wrong, how to disengage ourselves; instead of extending the arms, we thrust out our claws. I could suffer myself to be rudely handled by my friends; "Thou art a fool; thou knowest not what thou art talking about." I love stout expressions amongst gallant men, and to have them speak as they think; we must fortify and harden our hearing against this tenderness as to ceremonious sound of words. I love a strong and manly fa-

miliarity and converse; a friendship that flatters itself in the sharpness and vigour of its communication, as love, in biting and scratching; it is not vigorous and generous enough if it be not quarrelsome, if civilized and artificial, if it treads nicely and fears a shock; *Neque enim disputari, sine reprehensione, potest.*[1] "For no man can dispute without reprehending." When any one contradicts me, he raises my attention, not my anger; I advance towards him that controverts, as to one that instructs me; the cause of truth ought to be the common cause of both; what will he answer? The passion of anger has already confounded his judgment; has usurped the place of reason. It were not amiss that the decision of our diputes should be a matter of wager; that there might be a material mark of our losses, to the end we might the better remember them, and that my man might tell me: "Your ignorance and obstinacy cost you last year, at twenty times, a hundred crowns." I embrace and caress truth in what hand soever I find it, and cheerfully surrender myself, and extend to it my conquered arms, as far off as I can discover it; and, provided it be not too imperiously or airishly, take a pleasure in being reproved, and accommodate myself to my accusers, very often more by reason of civility than amendment, loving to gratify and nourish the liberty of admonition, by my facility of submitting to it, even at my own expense.

Nevertheless, it is hard to bring the men of my time to it; they have not the courage to correct, because they have not the courage to suffer themselves to be corrected, and speak always with dissimulation in the presence of one another. I take so great pleasure in being judged and known, that it is almost indifferent to me in which of the two forms I am so; my imagination does so often contradict and condemn itself, that 'tis all one to me if another do it, especially considering that I give his reprehension no greater authority than what I myself admit. But I break with him who car-

[1] Cicero, *de Finib.* i. 8.

ries himself so high, as I know some do, that regrets his advice if not believed, and takes it for an affront if it be not immediately followed. That Socrates always received smilingly the contradictions opposed against his arguments, it may be said that his strength of reason was the cause, and that the advantage being certain to fall on his side, he accepted them as matter of new victory; yet we see, on the contrary, that nothing in argument renders our sentiments so delicate as the opinion of the preëminence and disdain of the adversary; and that in reason 'tis rather for the weaker to take in good part the opposition that corrects him and sets him right. Indeed, I choose the frequenting those that ruffle me, rather than those that fear me; 'tis a dull and hurtful pleasure to have to do with people who admire us, and approve of all we say. Antisthenes[1] commanded his children "never to take it kindly or for a favour from any man that commended them." I am much prouder of the victory I obtain over myself, when, even in the ardour of dispute, I make myself submit to my adversary's force of reason, than I am pleased with the victory I obtain over him through his weakness. In short, I receive and admit all manner of hits that are direct, how weak soever; but I am too impatient of those that are made without form. I care not what the subject is, the opinions are to me all one, and I am indifferent whether I get the better or the worse. I can peaceably argue a whole day together, if the argument be carried on with order; I do not so much require force and subtlety as order; the order which we every day observe in the wrangling of shepherds and apprentices, but never amongst us. If they start from their subject 'tis an incivility, and yet we do it; but their tumult and impatience never put them out of their theme; their argument still continues its course; if they anticipate, and do not stay for one another, they at least

[1] Plutarch, *Of False Shame*, c. 12. Montaigne has confounded this Antisthenius or Antistheneus, as the Latin translation of Plutarch calls him, with the chief of the Cynic sect, who never had the surname of Hercules, which Plutarch gives to Antisthenius, and is constantly called Antisthenes.

understand one another very well. Any one answers quite well enough for me, if he answers to what I say; but when the dispute is irregular and perplexed, I leave the thing, and insist upon the form with anger and indiscretion; and fall into a wilful, malicious, and imperious way of disputation, of which I am afterwards ashamed. 'Tis impossible to deal fairly with a fool; my judgment is not only corrupted under the hand of so impetuous a master, but my conscience also.

Disputes that are ill conducted ought to be prohibited; the ill consequences of them

Our disputes ought to be interdicted, and punished, as well as other verbal crimes. What vice[1] do they not raise and heap up, being always governed and commanded by passion? We first quarrel with their reasons, and then with the men. We only learn to dispute that we may contradict; and every one contradicting and being contradicted, it falls out that the fruit of disputation is to lose and nullify truth; and therefore it is that Plato, in his *Republic*,[2] prohibits this exercise to weak and ill-descended minds. To what end do you go about to inquire of him who knows nothing to purpose? A man does no injury to the subject, when he leaves it, to seek how he may treat it; I do not mean by an artificial and scholastic way, but by a natural one, with a sound understanding. What will it be in the end? One flies to the east, the other to the west; they lose the principal, and wander in the crowd of incidents; after an hour of tempest they know not what they seek; one is low, the other high, and a third wide; one catches at a word and a simile; another is no longer sensible of what is said in opposition to him, being entirely absorbed in his own notions, engaged in following his own course, and not thinking of answering you;

[1] The description which Montaigne gives, from this place to the end of the paragraph, of the faults that commonly attend our disputes, is very just, and very agreeably expressed. Père Bonhours was so pleased with it, that he has inserted it almost verbatim in book iii. of his *Art de Penser*, chap. 20, but without directly ascribing the honour of it to Montaigne, whom he only points out by the vague character of *a celebrated author;* whereas he ought most certainly to have named Montaigne expressly, especially after having just criticized him in the same chapter with great severity, to call it no worse, when he not only quotes his words, but names him without any scruple.

[2] Book vii., towards the end.

another, finding himself weak, fears all, refuses all, and at the very beginning, confounds the subjects, or, in the very height of the dispute, stops short and grows silent; by a peevish ignorance affecting a proud contempt, or an unseasonable modest desire to shun debate; one, provided he strikes, cares not how much he lays himself open; another counts his words, and weighs them for reasons; another only brawls, and makes use of the advantage of his lungs; here's one that learnedly concludes against himself, and another that deafens you with prefaces and senseless digressions; another falls into downright railing, and seeks a ridiculous quarrel, to disengage himself from further contest with wits that press too hard upon his own; and a last man sees nothing in the reason of the thing, but draws a line of circumvallation about you of dialectic clauses, and the *formula* of his art.

The strange abuse that is made of science.

Now who would not enter into distrust of sciences, and doubt whether he can reap from them any solid fruit for the service of life, considering the use we put them to? *Nihil sanantibus literis.*[1] "Letters that bring no cure." Who has got understanding by his logic? Where are all her fair promises? *Nec ad melius vivendum, nec ad commodius disserendum.*[2] "It neither makes a man live better, nor reason more aptly." Is there more noise or confusion in the scolding of fish-wives, than in the public disputatations of men of this profession? I had rather my son should learn to speak in a tavern, than to prate in the schools. Take a master of arts, converse with him; why does he not make us sensible of this artificial excellence? Why does he not enchant women and ignorant fellows like us with admiration at the steadiness of his reasons, and the beauty of his order? Why does he not sway and persuade us to what he will? Why does a man who has so great advantage in matter, mix railing, indiscretion, and fury, in his disputation? Strip him of his gown, his

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 59.

[2] Epicurus, *apud* Cicero, *de Finib.* i. 19.

hood, and his Latin; let him not batter our ears with Aristotle, pure and crude; you will take him for one of us, or worse. Whilst they torment us with this complication and confusion of words, it fares with them, methinks, as with jugglers; their dexterity confounds and imposes upon our senses, but does not at all work upon our belief; out of this legerdemain they perform nothing that is not very ordinary and mean; for being more learned they are not the less fools. I love and honour knowledge as much as they that have it; and, in its true use, 'tis the most noble and the most powerful acquisition of men; but in such as I speak of (and the number of them is infinite), who build their fundamental sufficiency and value upon it, who appeal from their understanding to their memory, *sub alienâ umbrâ latentes*,[1] "crouching under borrowed shade," and who can do nothing but by book; I hate it, if I may dare to say so, even worse than stupidity itself. In my country, and in my time, learning improves fortunes enough, but not minds; if it meet with those that are dull and heavy, it overcharges and suffocates them, leaving them a crude and undigested mass; if airy and fine, it purifies, clarifies, and subtilizes them, even to exinanition. 'Tis a thing of almost indifferent quality; a very useful accession to a well-born soul, but hurtful and pernicious to others; or rather, a thing of very precious use, that will not suffer itself to be purchased under value. In the hand of some 'tis a sceptre, in that of others a fool's bauble.

It is method and management that give a value to disputation.

But let us proceed. What greater victory can you expect than to make your enemy see and know that he is not able to encounter you? When you get the better of your argument, 'tis truth that wins; when you get the advantage of order and method, 'tis then you that win. I am of opinion that, in Plato and Xenophon, Socrates disputes more in favour of the disputants, than in favour of the dispute, and more to instruct Euthydemus and Protagoras in the knowledge of their impertinence, than in

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 33.

the impertinence of their art. He takes hold of the first subject, like one that has a more profitable end than to explain it, namely, to clear the understandings that he takes upon him to instruct and exercise.

To hunt after truth is properly our business, and we are inexcusable if we carry on the chase impertinently and ill; to fail of catching it is another thing; for we are born to inquire after truth; it belongs to a greater power to possess it; it is not, as Democritus said, hid in the bottom of the deeps, but rather elevated to an infinite height in the divine knowledge.[1] The world is but a school of inquisition; it is not who shall carry the ring, but who shall run the best courses. He may play the fool as well who speaks true, as he that speaks false; for we are upon the manner, not the matter of speaking. 'Tis my humour as much to regard the form as the substance, and the advocate as much as the cause, as Alcibiades ordered we should; and I every day amuse myself with reading authors, without any consideration of their learning; their method is what I look after, not their subject; and just so do I hunt after the conversation of an eminent wit, not that he may teach me, but that I may know him; and, being acquainted, if I think him worthy, imitate him. Every man may speak truly; but methodically, and prudently, and with sufficiency, is a talent that few men have; thus 'tis that the falsity that proceeds from ignorance does not offend me; 'tis the folly. I have broken off several treaties that would have been of advantage to me, by reason of the irrelevancies of those with whom I treated. I am not moved once in a year at the faults of those over whom I have authority, but upon the account of the despicable absurdity and obstinacy of their allegations and excuses, we are every day going together by the ears; they neither understand what is said nor why, and answer accordingly; 'tis enough to drive a man mad. I never feel any hurt upon my head but when 'tis knocked against another head, and more

[1] Lactantius, *Divin. Instit.* iii. 28.

easily forgive the vices of my servants than their boldness, importunity, and folly. Let them do less, provided they understand what they do; you live in hopes to warm their affection to you; but there is nothing to be had or to be hoped for from a log.

A great fault in a man not to be able to bear with the follies of others.

But what if I take things otherwise than they are? perhaps I do; and therefore it is that I accuse my own impatience; and hold, in the first place, that it is equally vicious both in him that is in the right, and him that is in the wrong; for 'tis always a tyrannic sourness not to endure a form contrary to one's own; and besides, there cannot in truth be a greater, more enduring or more irregular folly, than to be moved and angry at the follies of the world; for it principally makes us quarrel with ourselves; and the old philosopher[1] had never wanted occasion for his tears, whilst he considered himself. Miso,[2] one of the seven sages, of a Timonian and Democritian humour, being asked what he laughed at, being alone: "That I do laugh alone," answered he. How many ridiculous things, in my own opinion, do I say and answer every day! And surely how many more, according to the opinion of others. If I bite my own lips, what ought others to do? In fine, we must live amongst the living, and let the river run under the bridge, without our troubling ourselves, or at least without our alteration. And, in truth, why do we meet a man with a hump back, or other deformity, without being moved, yet cannot endure the encounter of an irregular mind without being angry? This vicious sourness relishes more of the judge than the crime. Let us always have this saying of Plato in our mouths: "Do not I think things unsound because I am not sound in myself? Am I not myself in fault? May not my observation reflect upon myself?" A wise and divine saying, that lashes the most universal and common error of mankind. Not only the reproaches that we throw in the faces of one another, but

[1] *Heraclitus.* See Juvenal, x. 32.

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

our reasons also, our arguments and controversies are reboundable upon us, and we wound ourselves with our own weapons; of which antiquity has left me grave examples enough. It was ingeniously and home said, by him who was the inventor of this sentence:—

> Stercus cuique suum bene olet:
>
> "Every one likes the odour of his own dunghill."

We see nothing behind us; we mock ourselves a hundred times a day, when we deride our neighbour; and detest in others the defects which are more manifest in us, and wonder at them with a marvellous unconsciousness and impudence. It was but yesterday that I saw a man of understanding as pleasantly as justly scoffing at the folly of another, who did nothing but torment everybody with the catalogue of his genealogy and alliances, above half of them false (for they are most apt to fall into such ridiculous discourses, whose quality is most dubious and least sure); and yet, would he but have looked into himself, he would have discerned himself to be no less intemperate and impertinent, in extolling his wife's pedigree. Oh! importunate presumption, with which the wife sees herself armed by the hands of her husband himself! Did he understand Latin, we should say to him:—

> Agesis, hæc non insanit satis suâ sponte; instiga:[1]
>
> "If of herself she be not mad enough,
> Faith, urge her on."

I do not say that no man shall accuse another, who is not clean himself; for then no one would ever accuse, because none is absolutely clean from the same sort of spot; but I mean that our judgment, falling upon another whose name is then in question, should not at the same time spare ourselves, but sentence us, with an inward severe authority. 'Tis an office of charity, that he who cannot reclaim himself from a vice, should nevertheless endeavour to remove it from another, in

[1] Terence, *Andria*, iv. 2, 9.

whom perhaps it may not have so deep and malignant a root neither do I think it an answer to the purpose to tell him who reproves me for my fault, that he himself is guilty of the same. What of that? The reproof is notwithstanding true, and of very good use. Had we a good nose, our own ordure ought to stink worse to us, forasmuch as it is our own; and Socrates[1] is of opinion that whoever should find himself, his son, and a stranger guilty of any violence and wrong, ought to begin with himself, to present himself first to the sentence of justice, and to purge himself, implore the assistance of the hand of the executioner; in the next place, he should proceed to his son, and lastly to the stranger; if this precept seems of too high a flight, he ought at least to present himself the first to the punishment of his own conscience.

That which strikes our senses determines our judgments.

The senses are our proper and first judges, which perceive not things but by external accidents; and 'tis no wonder, if in all the parts of the service of our society there is so perpetual and universal a mixture of ceremonies and superficial appearances; insomuch that the best and most effectual part of our polities consist therein. 'Tis still man with whom we have to do, of whom the condition is wonderfully corporeal. Let those who, of these late years, would erect for us so contemplative and immaterial an exercise of religion, not wonder, if there be some who think it had vanished and melted through their fingers, had it not more upheld itself amongst us as a mark, title, and instrument of division and faction, than by itself. As in conversation, the gravity, robes, and fortune of him that speaks often give weight to vain arguments and idle words; it is not to be presumed, of course, but that a man so attended and feared has in him more than ordinary sufficiency; and that he to whom are given so many offices and commissions, so supercilious and proud, has not a great deal more in him than another that salutes him at so great a distance, and who has no employment at all. Not only the

[1] Plato. *Gorgias.*

words, but the airish looks also of these people, are considered and put to account; every one making it his business to give them some fine and solid interpretation. If they stoop to common conference, and that you offer anything but approbation and reverence, they then knock you down with the authority of their experience; they have heard, they have seen, they have done so and so; you are crushed with examples. I should tell them that the fruit of a surgeon's experience is not the history of his practice, and his remembering that he has cured four people of the plague, and three of the gout, unless he knows how hence to extract something whereon to form his judgment, and to make us sensible that he is become more skilful in his art; as in a concert of instruments, we do not hear a lute, a spinet, or a flute alone, but one entire harmony of all together. If travel and offices have improved them, 'tis a product of their understanding to make it appear. 'Tis not enough to reckon experiences, they must weigh and sort them, digest and distil them, to extract the reasons and conclusions they carry along with them. There were never so many historians as now; it is always good and of use to read them, for they furnish us everywhere with excellent and laudable instructions from the magazine of their memory, of great concern to the relief of life; but 'tis not that we seek for now; we examine whether these relators and collectors of things are commendable themselves.

I hate all sorts of tyranny, whether verbal or effectual; I am ever ready to oppose these vain circumstances that delude our judgments by the senses; and whilst I lie upon my guard against these extraordinary grandeurs, I find that, at best, they are but men, as others are:—

> Rarus enim ferme sensus communis in illâ
> Fortunâ:[1]

> "For rarely do we see
> Good common sense in those of his degree."

Perhaps we esteem and look upon them as far less than they

[1] Juvenal, viii. 73.

are, by reason they undertake more, and more expose themselves; they do not answer to the charge they have undertaken. There must be more vigour and strength in the bearer than in the burden; he who has not lifted as much as he can, leaves you to guess that he has still a strength beyond that, and that he has not been tried to the utmost of what he is able to do; he who sinks under his load makes a discovery of his best, and the weakness of his shoulders; this is the reason that we see so many silly people amongst the learned, so many that they are the majority; they would have made good husbandmen, good merchants, and good artisans; their natural vigour was cut out to that proportion. Knowledge is a thing of great weight; they faint under it; their understanding has neither vigour nor dexterity enough to set forth and distribute, to employ, or make use of, this rich and powerful matter; it has no prevailing virtue but in a strong nature, and such natures are very rare; and the weak ones, says Socrates,[1] spoil the dignity of philosophy in the handling; it appears useless and vicious, when ill lodged. They spoil and make fools of themselves,—

> Humani qualis simulatur simius oris,
> Quem puer arridens pretioso stamine serum
> Velavit, nudasque nates ac terga reliquit,
> Ludibrium mensis.[2]

> "Just like an ape, that in his face does bear
> Of man the counterfeited character,
> Whom wanton boys, the tables' laugh to move,
> Have dizen'd up in richest silk above;
> But, that the brute more laughable may show,
> Have left the buttocks raw and bald below."

Neither is it enough for those who govern and command us, and have all the world in their hand, to have a common understanding, and to be able to do what we can: they are very much below us if they be not infinitely above us; as they promise more, so they are to perform more.

And yet silence is to them not only a countenance of re-

[1] Plato, *Republic*, vi.

[2] Claud. *in Eutrop.* i. 303.

spect and gravity, but very often of good profit and policy too; for Megabysus, going to see Apelles in his painting-room, stood a great while without speaking a word, and at last began to talk of his paintings, for which he received this rude reproof: "Whilst thou wast silent thou seemedst to be something great, by reason of thy chains and pomp; but now that we have heard thee speak, there is not the meanest boy in my shop that does not despise thee."[1] Those magnificent paraphernalia, that mighty state, did not permit him to be ignorant with a common ignorance, and to speak irrelevantly of painting; he ought to have maintained, by his silence, this external and presumptive knowledge. To how many block-heads of my time has a cold and taciturn behaviour procured the credit of prudence and capacity?

Dignities more distributed by fortune than merit.

Dignities and offices are of necessity conferred more by fortune than upon the account of merit; and we are to blame to condemn kings when they are misplaced; on the contrary, 'tis a wonder they should have such good luck, where there is so little skill:—

> Principis est virtus maxima nosse suos;[2]
>
> "Of all a prince's virtues, 'tis the chief
> To know his courtiers;"

for nature has not given them a sight that can extend to so many people, to discern which excels the rest, nor to penetrate into our bosoms, where the knowledge of our wills and real value lies; they must choose us by conjecture and by groping; by the family, wealth, learning, and the voice of the people, which are all very feeble arguments. Whoever could find out a way that a man might judge by justice, and choose men by reason, would in this one thing establish a perfect form of government.

"Ay, but he brought this great affair to a very good pass." That is, indeed, to say something, but not to say enough, for

[1] Plutarch, *How to distinguish a Flatterer from a Friend*, c. 14.

[2] Martial, viii. 15.

this sentence is justly received: "That we are not to judge of counsels by events."[1] The Carthaginians punished the ill counsels of their captains, though the issue was successful;[2] and the people of Rome have often denied a triumph for great and very advantageous victories, because the conduct of the general was not answerable to his good fortune. We ordinarily see in the actions of the world that fortune, to show us her power in all things, and who takes a pride in abating our presumption, seeing she could not make fools wise, she has made them fortunate, in emulation of virtue, and favours those executions most the web of which is most purely her own; whence it is that we daily see the simplest amongst us bring to pass great affairs, both public and private; and, as Siramnez the Persian[3] answered those who wondered that his affairs succeeded so ill, considering that his plans were so wise: "That he was sole master of his designs, but that success was wholly in the power of fortune," these may answer the same, but with a contrary bias. Most worldly affairs are performed by themselves:[4]—

Fata viam inveniunt.[5]

"The fates find out a way."

The event often justifies a very foolish conduct; our interposition is nothing more than, as it were, a routine, and more commonly a consideration of custom and example, than of reason. Being astonished at the greatness of the execution of an affair, I have formerly been made acquainted, by those who have performed it, with the motives and plans on which they proceeded, and have found nothing in them but very ordinary counsels; and the most vulgar and commonplace are also perhaps the most sure and convenient for practice, if not for show. And what if the plainest reasons are the best seated? the meanest, lowest, and most beaten, most

1 Ovid. *Heroid.* ii. 85.
2 Livy, xxxviii. 48.
3 Plutarch, *Apotheg. of the Ancient Kings.*
4 "*Il mondo si governa da se stesso,*" said Pope Urban VIII.
5 Virgil, *Æneid*, iii. 395.

How the authority of the counsels of kings is to be preserved.

adapted to affairs? To maintain the authority of the counsels of kings, 'tis not necessary that profane persons should participate of them, nor see further into them than the first bar. He that will husband his reputation, must be reverenced upon credit, and altogether. My consultation gives a sketch first of the matter, and considers it lightly by the first face it presents. The stress and main of the business I have ever referred to heaven:—

Permitte divis cætera:[1]

"Leave to the gods the rest:"

good and ill fortune are, in my opinion, two sovereign powers; 'tis folly to think that human prudence can play the part of fortune; and vain is his attempt, who presumes to embrace causes and consequences, and to conduct by the hand the progress of his design, and most especially vain in the deliberations of war. There was never greater circumspection and military prudence than sometimes is seen amongst us; can it be that men are afraid to lose themselves by the way, that they reserve themselves to the end of the game? I moreover affirm that our wisdom itself, and wisest consultations, for the most part commit themselves to the conduct of chance; my will and my reason is sometimes moved by one breath, and sometimes by another; and many of those movements there are that govern themselves without me; my reason has uncertain and casual agitations and impulsions:—

Vertuntur species animorum, et pectora motus
Nunc alios, alios, dum nubila ventus agebat,
Concipiunt.[2]

"New instincts sway, and their inconstant mind
Shifts with the clouds, and varies with the wind."

Let a man but observe who are of greatest authority in cities, and who best do their own business, we shall find that they are commonly men of the least parts. Women, children, and

[1] Horace, *Od.* i. 9, 9.

[2] Virgil, *Georgic.* i. 420.

madmen, have had the fortune to govern great kingdoms equally well with the wisest princes; and Thucydides says, that the stupid more frequently do it than those of better understandings; we attribute the effects of their good fortune to their prudence:—

> Ut quisque fortunâ utitur,
> Ita præcellet; atque exinde sapere illum omnes dicimus:[2]

> "Men, who their chances can improve, we prize,
> And those whom fortune favours, we deem wise:"

wherefore I say that, in all sorts of matters, events are a very poor testimony of our worth and parts.

Now I was upon this point, that there needs no more, but to see a man promoted to dignity; though we knew him, but three days before, a man of no mark, yet an image of grandeur and ability insensibly steals into our opinion, and we persuade ourselves that, growing in reputation and attendants, he is also increased in merit; we judge of him not according to his value, but, as we do by counters, according to the prerogative of his place. If it happens so that he falls again, and is mixed with the common crowd, every one inquires with wonder into the cause of his having been hoisted so high: "Is it he?" say they: "did he know no more than this when he was in place? Do princes satisfy themselves with so little? Truly we were in good hands." This is a thing that I have often seen in my time; nay, so much as the very disguises of grandeur, represented in our comedies, in some sort move and deceive us. That which I myself adore in kings is the crowd of their adorers; all reverence and submission is due to them, except that of the understanding; my reason is not to bow and bend; 'tis my knees. Melanthius, being asked what he thought of the tragedy of Dionysius: "I could not see it," said he, "it was so clouded with language;"[3] so the most of those who judge of the discourses of great men ought to say: "I did not

[1] Book, iii. 37, *Oration of Cleon.*
[2] Plautus, *Pseudol.* ii. 3, 13.
[3] Plutarch, *On Hearing*, c. 7.

understand his words; he was so clouded with gravity majesty, and greatness." Antisthenes[1] one day entreated the Athenians to give order that their asses might be employed in tilling the ground as well as the horses; to which it was answered that those animals were not destined for such a service: "That's all one," replied he; "it only sticks at your command; for the most ignorant and incapable men you employ in your commands of war immediately become worthy enough, because you employ them." To which the custom of so many people who canonize the kings they have chosen out of their own body, and are not content only to honour, but adore them, comes very near. Those of Mexico, after the ceremonies of their king's coronation are finished, dare no more presume to look him in the face; but, as if they had deified him by his royalty, among the oaths they make him take to maintain their religion and laws, to be valiant, just, and mild, he moreover swears to make the sun run his course in his wonted light, to drain the clouds at a fit season, to confine rivers within their channels, and to cause all things necessary for his people to be borne by the earth.[2]

Deification and adoration of the kings of Mexico.

I differ from this common fashion, and am more apt to suspect capacity when I see it accompanied with grandeur of fortune and public applause; we are to consider of what advantage it is to speak when he pleases, to choose the subject he will speak of, to interrupt or change other men's arguments with a magisterial authority, to protect himself from the opposition of others by a nod, a smile, or silence, in the presence of an assembly that trembles with reverence and respect. A man of a prodigious fortune, coming to give his judgment upon some slight dispute that was foolishly set on foot at his table, began in these words: "It can be only a liar or a fool that will say otherwise than so and so." Pursue this philosophical point with a dagger in your hand.

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, vi. 8.

[2] Lopez de Gomara, *Historia General de las Indias*, ii. 77.

There is another observation I have made, from which I draw great advantage; which is, that, in conferences and disputes, every word that seems to be good is not immediately to be accepted. Most men are rich in borrowed words; a man may very probably say a good thing without comprehending the force of it himself. That a man does not perfectly understand all he borrows, may perhaps be verified in myself. A man must not always presently yield, what truth or beauty soever may seem to be in the argument; either a man must stoutly oppose it, or draw back, under colour of not understanding it, to try on all parts how it is lodged in the author, or it may happen that we may aid the point, and carry it beyond its proper reach. I have sometimes, in the necessity and heat of the combat, employed sudden whisks, that have gone through and through, beyond my expectation and design; I only gave them in number; they were received in weight. As when I contend with a vigorous man, I please myself with anticipating his conclusions, I ease him of the trouble of explaining himself; I strive to prevent his imagination, whilst it is yet springing and imperfect; the order and pertinency of his understanding warns and threatens me afar off; I deal quite contrary with these; I must understand and presuppose nothing but by them. If they determine in general words: "This is good, that is not," and that they happen to be in the right, see if it be not fortune that hits it off for them. Let them a little circumscribe and limit their judgment, why or how it is so. These universal judgments, that I see so common, signify nothing; these are men that salute a whole people in a crowd together; they who have real acquaintance take notice of and salute them particularly and by name; but 'tis a hazardous attempt; from which I have more than every day seen it fall out that weak understandings, having a mind to appear ingenious in taking notice, as they read a book, of that which is best, and most to be admired, fix their admiration upon something so very ill chosen that, instead of making us

discern the excellency of the author, they make us see their own ignorance. This exclamation is safe enough: "This is fine!" after having heard a whole page of Virgil; and by that the cunning sort of fools save themselves; but to undertake to follow him line by line, and with an expert and approved judgment to observe where a good author excels himself, weighing the words, phrases, inventions, and various excellences, one after another; take heed of that. *Videndum est, non modo quid quisque loquatur, sed etiam quid quisque sentiat, atque etiam quâ de causâ quisque sentiat.*[1] "A man is not only to examine what every one says, but also what every one thinks, and for what reason every one thinks." I every day hear fools say things that are by no means foolish; they say a good thing; let us examine how far they understand it, whence they have it, and what they mean by it. We help them to make use of this fine expression, and this fine reason, which is none of theirs, they only have it in keeping; they have let it out at a venture; we bring it for them into credit and esteem. You lend them a hand; to what purpose? They do not think themselves obliged to you for it, and become more fools still. Never take their part, let them alone; they will handle the matter like people who are afraid of burning their fingers; they neither dare change its seat nor light, nor break into it; shake it never so little, it slips through their fingers; they give up their cause, be it never so strong or good soever; these are fine arms, but ill mounted. How many times have I seen the experience of this? Now, if you come to explain anything to them, and to confirm them, they presently catch at it, and rob you of the advantage of your interpretation: "It was what I was about to say; it was just my thought; and if I did not express it so, it was only for want of language." Very pretty! Malice itself must be employed to correct this proud ignorance. Hegesias's doctrine,[2] that we are "Neither to hate nor accuse, but instruct," has reason elsewhere; but here 'tis

[1] Cicero, *Offic.* i. 41.

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, ii. 95.

injustice and inhumanity to relieve and set him right who stands in no need on't, and is the worse for't. I love to let them step deeper into the dirt; and so deep that, if it be possible, they may at least discern their error.

Folly and absurdity are not to be cured by bare admonition; and what Cyrus answered to him who importuned him to harangue his army, upon the point of battle, that "men do not become valiant and warlike upon a sudden, by a fine oration, no more than a man becomes a good musician by hearing a fine song,"[1] may properly be said of such an admonition as this. These are apprenticeships that are to be served beforehand, by a long and continued education. We owe this care, and this assiduity of correction and instruction to our own; but to go preach to the first passer-by, and to lord it over the ignorance and folly of the first we meet, is a thing that I abhor. I rarely do it, even in my own particular conferences, and rather surrender my cause than proceed to these supercilious and magisterial instructions; my humour is unfit either to speak or write for beginners; but for things that are said in common discourse, or amongst other things, I never oppose them, either by word or sign, how false or absurd soever.

Folly not to be cured by admonition.

As to the rest, nothing vexes me so much in folly, as that it pleases itself more than any reason can reasonably please itself. 'Tis unlucky that prudence forbids us to satisfy and trust in ourselves, and always dismisses us timorous and discontented; whereas obstinacy and temerity fill those who are possessed with them, with joy and assurance. 'Tis for the ignorant to look at other men over the shoulder, always returning from the combat full of joy and triumph; and moreover, for the most part, this arrogance of speech, and gayety of countenance, gives them the better of it in the opinion of the audience, which is commonly ignorant, and incapable of well judging, and discerning the real advantage. Obstinacy of opinion and heat in argument are

Obstinacy a testimony of folly.

[1] Xenophon, *Cyrop.* iii. 3, 23.

the surest proofs of folly; is there anything so assured, resolute, disdainful, contemplative, serious, and grave as an ass?

May we not mix with the subject of conversation and communication, the quick and sharp repartees which mirth and familiarity introduce amongst friends, pleasantly and wittingly jesting with one another? an exercise for which my natural gayety renders me fit enough; and if it be not so extended and serious as the other I just spoke of, 'tis no less smart and ingenious, nor of less utility, as Lycurgus thought.[1] For my part I contribute to it more liberty than wit, and have therein more of luck than invention; but I am perfect in suffering, for I endure a retort that is not only sharp, but indiscreet to boot, without being moved at all; and whatever attack is made on me, if I have not an answer immediately ready, I do not take up the time in pursuing the point with a tedious and impertinent contest, bordering upon obstinacy, but let it pass, and, laughingly lowering my flag for the time, defer my revenge for a luckier occasion; there is no merchant that always gains. Most men change their countenance and their voice where their wit fails; and, by an unseasonable fit of anger, instead of revenging themselves, accuse at once their own folly and impatience. In this pastime, we sometimes pinch the private strings of our imperfections, which, at another time, when more temperate, we cannot touch without offence, and profitably give one another a hint of our defects.

There are other sports, practical jokes, rude and indiscreet, after the French manner, that I mortally hate; my skin is very tender and sensible; I have in my time seen two princes of the blood interred upon that very account. 'Tis unhandsome to fall out and fight in play.

As to the rest, when I have a mind to judge of any one, I ask him how much he is satisfied with himself, to what degree his speaking or his work pleases him. I will have none of these fine excuses: "I did it only to amuse myself;

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 11.

Ablatum mediis opus est incudibus istud;[1]

'This work unfinish'd from the anvil came.'

I was not an hour about it; I have never looked at it since." Well, then, say I, lay these aside; and give me a perfect one, such a one as you would be measured by; and then, what do you think is the best thing in your work; is it this part or that? the grace or the matter, the invention, the judgment, or the learning? For I find that men are commonly as wide of the mark in judging of their own works, as those of others; not only by reason of the kindness they have for them, but for want of capacity to know and distinguish them. The work, by its own fairness and fortune, may second the workman, and sometimes outstrip him, beyond his invention and knowledge. For my part, I do not judge of the value of other men's works more obscurely than of my own; and prize my Essays now high, now low, with great doubt and inconstancy. There are several books that are useful upon the account of their subjects, from which the author derives no praise; and good books, as well as good works, that shame the workman. I may write the manner of our feasts, and the fashion of our clothes, and may write them ill; I may publish the edicts of my time, and the letters of princes that pass from hand to hand; I may make an abridgment of a good book (and every abridgment of a good book is a foolish abridgment), which book shall come to be lost, and so on. Posterity will derive a singular utility from such compositions; but what honour shall I have, unless by great good fortune? A great part of the most famous books are in this condition.

When I read Philip de Comines, several years ago, doubtless a very good author, I there took notice of this for no vulgar saying: "That a man must have a care of doing his master such great service that at last he will not know how to give him his just reward;" I ought to commend the

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* i. 6, 29.

inventor, not him,[1] for I met with it in Tacitus, not long since: *Beneficia eo usque læta sunt, dum videntur exsolvi posse; ubi multum antevenere, pro gratiâ odium redditur;*[2] "Benefits are so far acceptable, as they are in a capacity of being returned; but once exceeding that, hatred is returned instead of thanks;" and Seneca boldly says: *Nam qui putat esse turpe non reddere, non vult esse cui reddat;*[3] "For he who thinks it a shame not to requite, would not have that man live to whom he owes return;" and Cicero, more faintly: *Qui se non putat satisfacere, amicus esse nullo modo potest.*[4] "Who thinks himself behindhand in obligation, can by no means be a friend." The subject, according to what it is, may make a man be looked upon as learned, and of good memory; but to judge in him the parts more his own and more worthy, the vigour and beauty of his soul, we must first know what is his own, and what is not; and in that which is not his own, how far we are obliged to him for the choice, disposition, ornament, and language he has there presented us with. What if he has borrowed the matter, and spoiled the form, as it oft falls out!

We, who are little read in books, are in this strait, that when we meet with some fine fancy in a new poet, or some strong argument in a preacher, we dare not nevertheless commend it, till we have first informed ourselves of some learned man if it be their own, or borrowed from some other; until that, I always stand upon my guard. I lately came from reading the history of Tacitus right through (which but seldom happens to me, it being twenty years since I have stuck to any one book an hour together); and I did it at the instance of a gentleman for whom France has great esteem, as well for his own particular worth, as upon the account of a constant form of capacity and virtue, which runs through a great many brothers of them. I do not know any author

[1] Comines does not take the merit of this apothegm to himself, but says he had it from his master (Louis XI.), who mentioned the name of its author. *Memoirs*, iii. 12.

[2] *Annal.* iv. 18.

[3] *Epist.* 81.

[4] Q. Cicero, *de Pet. Consul*, c. 9.

that in a public narration mixes so much consideration of manners and particular inclinations; and it seems to me quite contrary to his opinion,[1] that being especially to follow the lives of the emperors of his time, so various and extreme in all sorts of forms, and so many notable actions, as their cruelty particularly produced in their subjects, he had a stronger and more attractive matter to treat of, than if he had had to describe battles and universal commotions; so that I oft find him sterile, running over those brave deaths, as if he feared to trouble us with their multitude and length. This form of histories is by much the most useful; public commotions depend most upon the conduct of fortune, private ones upon our own. 'Tis rather a judgment than a deduction of history; there are in it more precepts than stories; it is not a book to read, 'tis a book to study and learn; 'tis so full of sentences that, right or wrong, they are everywhere in muster; 'tis a nursery of ethics and political discourses, for the use and ornament of those who have any place in the government of the world. He always pleads by strong and solid reasons, after a pointed and subtle manner, according to the affected style of that age, which was so in love with swelling periods, that, where quickness and subtlety were wanting in things, they supplied them with words. It is not much unlike the style of Seneca. I look upon Tacitus as more sinewy, and Seneca more sharp. His pen seems most proper for a troubled and sick estate, as ours at present is; you would often say that he depicts and points at us.

The character of Tacitus.

They who doubt of his fidelity sufficiently accuse themselves of being his enemy upon some other account. His opinions are sound, and lean for the most part towards the right side in Roman affairs. And yet I am angry at him for judging more severely of Pompey, than is borne out by the opinion of those worthy men that lived in the same time, and treated with him; and for putting him on a level with Marius

[1] *Annal.* xvi. 16.

and Sylla, excepting that he was more close.[1] Other writers have not acquitted his intention in the government of affairs, from ambition and revenge; and even his friends were afraid that his victory would have transported him beyond the bounds of reason, but not to so immeasurable a degree; there is nothing in his life that has threatened us with so express cruelty and tyranny. Neither ought we to weigh suspicion against evidence; and therefore I do not believe him here. That his narratives are ingenuous and straightforward, may be argued from this very thing, that they are not always applied to the conclusions of his judgments, which he follows according to the inclination he has taken, very often beyond the matter he shows us, which he will not deign to look upon with so much as one glance. He needs no excuse for having approved the religion of his time, according as the laws enjoined, and to have been ignorant of the true; this was his misfortune, not his fault.

I have principally considered his judgment, and am not very well satisfied throughout; as at these words in the letter, that Tiberius, being old and sick, sent to the senate:[2] "What shall I write to you, sirs, or how shall I write to you, or what shall I not write to you, at this time? May the gods and the goddesses lay a worse punishment upon me than I am every day tormented with, if I know." I do not see why he should so positively apply these to a sharp remorse, tormenting the conscience of Tiberius; at least, when I was in the same condition, I perceived no such thing.

And this also seemed to me a little mean in him, that having to say he had borne honourable office in Rome, he excuses himself that he does not speak it out of ostentation;[3] this seems somewhat mean for such a soul as his; for not to speak roundly of a man's self, implies some want of courage; a firm and lofty judgment, and that judges soundly and surely, makes use of his own example upon all occasions, as

[1] *Hist.* ii. 38
[2] Tacitus, *Annal.* vi. 6. Suetonius, *Life of Tiberius*, c. 67.
[3] *Annal.* xi. 11.

well as those of others; and gives evidence as freely of himself as of a third person. We are to pass by these common rules of society in favour of truth and liberty. I dare not only speak of myself, but to speak only of myself; when I write of anything else, I miss my way, and wander from my subject. I am not so indiscreetly enamoured of myself, that I cannot distinguish and consider myself apart, as I do a neighbour or a tree; 'tis equally a fault not to discern how far a man's worth extends, and to say more than a man discovers in himself. We owe more love to God than to ourselves, and know him less; and yet speak of him as much as we will.

If the writings of Tacitus relate anything true of his qualities, he was a great man, upright and bold, not of a superstitious but of a philosophical and generous virtue. Some may think him a little too bold in his relations; as where he tells us of a soldier, carrying a burden of wood, whose hands were so frozen, and so stuck to the load, that they there remained closed and dead, being severed from his arms.[1] I always in such things submit to the authority of such great witnesses.

What he says also, that Vespasian, by the favour of the god Serapis, cured in Alexandria a blind woman, by anointing her eyes with his spittle and some other miracle, I forget what,[2] he does by the example and duty of all good historians. He records all events of importance; and amongst public matters, also, the common rumours and opinions. 'Tis their part to recite common beliefs, not to regulate them; that part concerns divines and philosophers, who are the guides of conscience. And therefore it was that this companion of his, and as great a man as himself, very wisely said: *Equidem plura transcribo quam credo; nam nec affirmare sustineo de quibus dubito, nec subducere quæ accepi;*[3] "Truly, I set down more things than I believe, for I can neither endure to affirm things whereof I doubt, nor suppress what I have

[1] *Annal.* xiii. 35. [2] *Hist.* iv. 81. [3] Quint. Curt. ix. 1

heard;" and this other: *Hæc neque affirmare, neque refellere operæ pretium est . . . ; famæ rerum standum est.*[1] "'Tis neither worth the while to affirm nor to refute these things; we must stand to report." And writing in an age wherein the belief of prodigies began to decline, he says he would not, nevertheless, forbear to insert in his annals, and to give a relation of things received by so many worthy men, and with so great reverence of antiquity; which is very well said. Let them deliver us history, more as they receive it than as they believe it. I, who am monarch of the matter whereof I treat, and who am accountable to none, do not, nevertheless, always believe myself; I often hazard sallies of my own fancy, which I very much suspect, and certain quibbles, at which I shake my ears; but I let them go at a venture. I see that others get reputation by such things; 'tis not for me alone to judge. I present myself standing, and lying on my face, my back, my right side, and my left, and in all my natural postures. Minds, though equal in force, are not equal in taste and application.

This is what my memory has presented me in gross, and with uncertainty enough; all judgments in gross are weak and imperfect.

CHAPTER IX.

OF VANITY.

THERE is not, perhaps, a more manifest vanity than to write so vainly about it.[2] That which divinity has so divinely expressed to us, ought to be carefully and continually meditated by understanding men. Who does not see that I have taken a road, in which, incessantly and without labour, I shall

[1] Livy, i. *Præf.* and viii. 6. [2] "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." *Eccles.* i. 2.

proceed, so long as there shall be ink and paper in the world? I can give no account of my life by my actions; fortune has placed them too low; I must do it by fancies. And yet I have seen a gentleman that only communicated his life by the workings of his belly; you might see in his house a show of a row of basins of seven or eight days' stools; that was all his study, all his discourse; all other talk stunk in his nostrils. These here, somewhat more presentable, are the excrements of an old mind, sometimes thick, sometimes thin, and always indigested. And when shall I have done representing the continual agitation and change of my thoughts, as they come into my head, seeing that Diomedes[1] filled six thousand books upon the sole subject of grammar? What must prating produce, since prating, and the first beginning to speak, stuffed the world with such a horrible load of volumes? So many words about words only. O Pythagoras, why didst not thou allay the tempest? They accused one Galba of old for living idly; he made answer, "That every one ought to give account of his actions, but not of his leisure." He was mistaken, for justice has cognizance and jurisdiction even over those that do nothing, or only play at working.

But there should be some restraint of law against foolish and impertinent scribblers, as well as against vagabonds and idlers; which, if there was, both I and a hundred others would be banished the kingdom. I do not speak this in jest: scribbling seems to be a sign of a disordered age; when did we write so much as since our civil wars? when the Romans so much, as when they were going to ruin? Besides that the refining of wits does not make people wiser in a government; this idle employment springs from this, that every one applies himself negligently to the duty of his vocation, and debauches in it. The corruption of the age is made up by the particular contributions of every individual man; some

[1] *Dydimus*, not *Diomedes;* and *four housand*, not *six thousand*. See Seneca, *Epist.* 88. The grammarian Diomedes is not known to have written more than one work, in three books, "On the Latin Language and Versification."

contribute treachery, others injustice, irreligion, tyranny, avarice, and cruelty, according as they have power; the weaker sort contribute folly, vanity, and idleness; and of these I am one. It seems as if it were the season for vain things when the hurtful oppress us; in a time when doing ill is common, to do nothing but what signifies nothing, is a kind of commendation. 'Tis my comfort that I shall be one of the last that shall be called in question; and whilst the greater offenders are calling to account, I shall have leisure to amend; for it would, methinks, be against reason to punish the less troublesome whilst we are infested with the greater. As the physician Philotimus said to one who presented him his finger to dress, and who he perceived, both by his complexion and his breath, had an ulcer in his lungs: "Friend," said he, "it is not now time to concern yourself about your fingers' ends."[1]

And yet I saw, some years ago, a person whose name and memory I have in very great esteem, in the very height of our great disorders, when there was neither law nor justice put in execution, nor magistrate that performed his office, no more than there is now, publish I know not what pitiful reformations about clothes, cookery, and law chicanery. These are amusements wherewith to feed a people that are ill used, to show that they are not totally forgotten. These others do the same, who insist upon stoutly defending the forms of speaking, dances, and games, to a people totally abandoned to all sorts of execrable vices. 'Tis no time to bathe and clean a man's self when he is seized by a violent fever; 'tis for the Spartans only to fall to combing and curling themselves, when they are just upon the point of running headlong into some extreme danger of their lives.

For my part, I have yet a worse custom, that if my shoe go awry, I let my shirt and my cloak do so to; I scorn to mend myself by halves; when I am out of order, I feed on mischief; I abandon myself through despair, and let myself

[1] Plutarch, *How to discern a Flatterer*, c. 31.

go towards the precipice, and, as the saying is, throw the helve after the hatchet. I am obstinate in growing worse, and think myself no more worth my own care; I am either good or ill throughout. 'Tis favourable to me that the desolation of this kingdom falls out in the desolation of my age. I better suffer that my ills be multiplied, than if my goods had been disturbed. The words I utter in mishap, are words of spite; my courage sets up its bristles instead of letting them down; and, contrary to others, I am more devout in good than in evil fortune, according to the precept of Xenophon,[1] if not according to his reason, and am more ready to turn up my eyes to heaven to return thanks than to crave. I am more solicitous to improve my health when I am well, than to restore it when I am sick. Prosperity is the same discipline and instruction to me, that adversity and persecution are to others. As if good fortune were a thing incompatible with good conscience, men never grow good but in evil fortune. Happiness is to me a singular spur to modesty and moderation; entreaty wins, a threat checks me; favour makes me bend, fear stiffens me.

Amongst human conditions this is common enough, to be better pleased with strange things than our own, and to love motion and change;— Change pleasing to men.

> Ipsa dies ideo nos grato perluit haustu,
> Quod permutatis hora recurrit equis;[2]
>
> "The light of day itself doth chiefly please,
> Because the hours those steeds have changed for these;"

I have my share of this. Those who follow the other extreme of agreeing with themselves to value what they have above all the rest, and to conclude no beauty can be greater than what they see, if they are not wiser than we, are really more happy. I do not envy their wisdom, but their good fortune.

This greedy humour of new and unknown things helps to

[1] *Cyropædia*, i. 6, 3. Plutarch, *On Contentment of Mind.*

[2] Petronius, *Frag.* p. 678.

nourish in me the desire of travel; but a great many more circumstances contribute to it. I am very willing to run away from the government of my house. There is, I confess, a kind of convenience in commanding, though it were but in a barn, and to be obeyed by one's servants; but 'tis too uniform and languishing a pleasure, and is moreover of necessity mixed with a thousand vexatious thoughts; one while the poverty and the oppression of your tenants, another, quarrels amongst your neighbours, another, the trespasses they make upon you, afflict you:—

> Aut verberatæ grandine vineæ,
> Fundusque mendax, arbore nunc aquas
> Culpante, nunc torrentia agros
> Sidera, nunc hiemes iniquas;[1]

> "Whether his vines be smit with hail,
> Whether his promised harvests fail,
> Perfidious to his toil;
> Whether his drooping trees complain
> Of angry winter's chilling rain,
> Or stars, that turn the soil;"

and that God scarce in six months sends a season wherewith your bailiff is satisfied, or that if it serves the vines, spoils not the meadows;—

> Aut nimiis torret fervoribus ætherius sol,
> Aut subiti perimunt imbres, gelidæque pruinæ,
> Flabraque ventorum violento turbine vexant:[2]

> "The scorching sun, with his too busy beams,
> Burns up the fruits, or clouds do drown the streams:
> Or, chill'd by too much snows, they soon decay;
> Or storms blow them and all our hopes away:"

to which may be added the new and neat-made shoe of the man of old, that hurts your foot;[3] and that a stranger does

[1] Horace, *Od.* iii. 1, 29.
[2] Lucret. v. 216.
[3] Montaigne here probably refers to his wife, and the paraphrase alluded to in Plutarch, *Life of Paulus Æmilius*, c. 3, will explain what he means. "A Roman having repudiated his wife, his friends reproached him, remonstrating that she was fair and good, and had fine children. To which the husband replied by showing his foot, and saying: 'This shoe is new, and well made; but none of you know where it pinches; I do.'"

not understand how much it costs you, and what you contribute to maintain that show of order that is seen in your family, and that perhaps you buy too dear.

The government of a family more troublesome than hard.

I came late to the government of a family; they whom nature sent into the world before me long eased me of that trouble; so that I had already taken another bent more suitable to my humour. Yet, for so much as I have seen, 'tis an employment more troublesome than hard. Whoever is capable of anything else will easily do that. Had I a mind to be rich, that way would seem too long; I had served kings, a more profitable traffic than any other. Since I pretend to nothing but the reputation of having got nothing, any more than wasted nothing, conformable to the rest of my life, improper either to do good or ill of any moment, and that I only desire to pass on, I can do it, thanks be to God, without any great attention. At the worst, evermore prevent poverty by lessening your expense; 'tis that which I make my great concern, and doubt not but to do it before I shall be compelled. As to the rest, I have sufficiently settled my thoughts to live upon less than I have, and live contentedly: *Non æstimatione census, verum victu atque cultu, terminatur pecuniæ modus.*[1] "'Tis not in the value of possessions, but in our diet and clothing, that our riches are truly limited." My real need does not so wholly take up all I have, that fortune has not whereunto to fasten her teeth without biting to the quick. My presence, as unknowing and disdainful as it is, does me great service in my domestic affairs. I employ myself in them, but it goes against the hair; considering moreover that I have this in my house, that though I burn my candle at one end by myself, the other is not spared.

Journeys do me no harm but only by their expense, which is great and more than I am well able to bear; being always wont to travel with not only a necessary, but a handsome equipage, I must make them so much shorter and fewer,

[1] Cicero, *Paradox*, vi. 3.

wherein I spend but the froth, and what I have reserved for such uses, delaying and deferring my motion till that be ready. I will not that the pleasure of going abroad spoil my pleasure when returned home; on the contrary, I would have them nourish and favour one another. Fortune has assisted me in this, that since my principal profession in this life was to live at ease, and rather idly than busily, she has deprived me of the necessity of growing rich to provide for the multitude of my heirs. If there be not enough for one, of that whereof I have had so plentifully enough, at his peril be it; his imprudence will not deserve that I should wish him more. And every one, according to the example of Phocion,[1] provides sufficiently for his children, who so provides for them as to leave them as much as was left him. I should by no means like Crates' way;[2] he left his money in the hands of a banker, with this condition; that if his children were fools, he should then give it to them; if witty, he should then distribute it to the greatest fools of the people. As if fools, being less capable of living without riches, were more capable of using them!

So it is that the damage which is occasioned by my absence seems not to deserve, so long as I am able to support it, that I should waive the occasions of diverting myself from that troublesome assistance.

There is always something that goes amiss. The affairs one while of one house and then of another will tear you to pieces; you pry into everything too near; your perspicacity does you hurt here as well as in other things. I steal away from occasions of vexing myself, and turn from the knowledge of things that go amiss, and yet cannot I so order it but that every hour I jostle against something or other that displeases me, and the tricks that they most conceal from me are those that I the soonest come to know; some there are that a man does well himself to help to conceal. Vain vexations, vain sometimes, but always vexations. The smallest

[1] Nepos, *in Vitâ*, c. 1. [2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, vi. 88.

and slightest impediments are the most piercing, and as small print most tires the eyes, so do little affairs the most disturb us. A rout of little ills more offends than one, how great soever. By how much these domestic thorns are numerous and loose, by so much they prick deeper, and without warning, easily surprising us when least we suspect them. I am no philosopher; evils oppress me according to their weight, and they weigh as much according to the form as the matter, and very often more. If I have therein more perspicacity than the vulgar, I have also more patience; in short, they weigh with me, if they do not hurt me. Life is a tender thing, and easily molested. Since my age has made me grow more pensive and morose: *Nemo enim resistit sibi, cum cæperit impelli*,[1] "No man resists himself after he once begins to decline," for the most trivial cause imaginable, I irritate that humour, which afterwards nourishes and exasperates itself of its own accord; attracting and heaping up matter upon matter whereon to feed:—

> Stillicidi casus lapidem cavat:[2]
>
> "A falling drop at last will cave a stone:"

these continual trickling drops make ulcers in me. Ordinary inconveniences are never light; they are continual and irreparable, especially when they spring from the members of one's family, continual and inseparable. When I consider my affairs at distance and in gross, I find, because perhaps my memory is none of the best, that they have gone on hitherto improving, beyond my reason or expectation. Methinks my revenue is greater than it is; its prosperity betrays me. But when I pry more narrowly into the business, and see how all details go,—

> Tum vero in curas animum diducimus omnes:[3]
>
> "Then my breast
> Is with innumerable cares oppress'd."

I find a thousand things to desire and to fear. To give them

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 13. [2] Lucret. i. 314. [3] *Æneid*, v. 720.

quite over is very easy for me to do; but to look after them without trouble is very hard. 'Tis a miserable thing to be in a place where everything you see employs and concerns you, and I fancy that I more cheerfully enjoy the pleasures of another man's house, and with greater and purer relish, than those of my own. Diogenes, according to my humour, answered him well, who asked what sort of wine he liked the best, "Another man's," said he.[1]

My father took a delight in building at Montaigne, where he was born, and in all the government of domestic affairs, I love to follow his example and rules, and shall engage those who are to succeed me, as much as in me lies, to do the same. Could I do better for him, I would. I am proud that his will is still performing and acting by me. God forbid that in my hands I should ever suffer any image of life, that I am able to render to so good a father, to fail! And where I have taken in hand to finish some old piece of wall, and to complete some building, truly I have done it more out of respect to his design than to my own satisfaction; and am angry at my own idleness that I have not proceeded further to finish the few beginnings he has left in his house; and so much the more, because I am very likely to be the last possessor of my race, and to give the last hand to it; for, as to my own particular application, neither the pleasure of building, which they say is so bewitching, nor hunting, nor gardens, nor the other pleasures of a retired life, much amuse me. And it is what I am angry at myself for, as I am for all other opinions that are incommodious to me; I do not so much care to have them vigorous and learned, as I would have them easy and convenient for life; they are true and sound enough, if they are profitable and pleasing. Such as, hearing me declare my ignorance in domestic and husbandry matters, whisper in my ear that it is disdain, and that I neglect to know the instruments of husbandry, its seasons, and order; how they order my vines, how they graft, and to

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, vi. 54.

know the names and forms of herbs and fruits, and the dressing the meat by which I live, with the names and prices of the stuffs I wear, because I have set my heart upon some higher knowledge, destroy me. 'Tis folly, and rather imbecility than glory; I had rather be a good horseman than a good logician:—

> Quin tu aliquid saltem potius, quorum indiget usus,
> Viminibus mollique paras detexere junco. [1]

> "Rather of osiers thou, with happier care,
> Or plaited rushes useful frails prepare."

We busy our thoughts about the general concern, and about universal causes and conducts, which will very well carry on themselves without our care; and lay aside our own business and ourselves, which are more our affair than man. Now I am indeed for the most part at home; but I would be more pleased there than anywhere else:—

> Sit meæ sedes utinam senectæ,
> Sit modus lasso maris, et viarum,
> Militiæque! [2]

> "May Tiber's walls, th' Argéan seat,
> Afford my age a calm retreat!
> There, worn with journeys, wars, and seas,
> May I enjoy unenvied ease."

I know not whether or no I shall bring it about. I could wish that, instead of some other portion of his succession, my father had resigned to me the passionate affection he had in his old age to his household affairs; he was very happy in that he could accommodate his desires to his fortune, and satisfy himself with what he had. Political philosophy may, as much as it will, condemn the meanness and sterility of my employment, if I can once come to relish it as he did. I am quite of opinion that the most honourable calling is to serve the public, and to be useful to many: *Fructus enim ingenii et virtutis, omnisque præstantiæ, tum maximus capitur, quum in proximum quemque confertur.*[3] "We then reap

[1] Virgil, *Eclog.* ii. 71. [2] Horace, *Ode* ii. 6, 6. [3] Cicero, *de Amicitiâ*, c. 19.

the most wit, virtue, and all sorts of merit, when they are conferred upon every one of our nearest relations." For my part, I disclaim it; partly out of conscience (for where I see the weight that lies upon such employments, I perceive also the little means I have to contribute to them; and Plato, who was a master in all sorts of government, did not nevertheless forbear to abstain from them), and partly out of cowardice. I content myself with enjoying the world without bustle, only to live an irreproachable life, and such a one as may neither be a burden to myself, nor to any other.

Never did any man more faintly and negligently suffer himself to be governed by a third person than I should do, had I any one to whom to intrust myself. One of my wishes at this time should be to have a son-in-law that could comfortably cherish my old age, and to rock it asleep; into whose hands I might deposit, in full sovereignty, the management and use of all my goods, that he might dispose of them as I do, and get by them what I get, provided that he on his part were truly acknowledging, and a friend. But we live in a world where loyalty in one's own children is unknown.

He that has the charge of my purse upon travel has it purely, and without control, and might deceive me in reckoning; but, if he is not a devil, I oblige him to deal faithfully with me by so entire a trust. *Multi fallere docuerunt dum timent falli, et aliis jus peccandi suspicando fecerunt.*[1] "Many have taught others to deceive by fearing to be deceived, and by suspecting them have given them a just title to do ill." The most common security I take of my people is ignorance; I never presume any to be vicious till I have first found them so; and repose the most confidence in the younger sort, that I think are least spoiled by example. I had rather be told at two months' end that I have spent four hundred crowns, than to have my ears battered every night with "three, five, seven;" and yet I have been this way as little robbed as

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 3.

another. It is true I am willing enough not to see it; I intentionally, indeed, harbour a kind of perplexed, uncertain knowledge of my money; for, to a certain proportion, I am content to doubt. One must leave a little room for the infidelity or indiscretion of a servant; if you have enough left in gross to do your business, let the overplus of fortune's liberality run a little more freely at her mercy; 'tis the gleaner's portion. After all, I do not so much value the fidelity of my people as I despise their injury. Oh! what a mean and ridiculous thing it is for a man to study his money, to delight himself with handling and telling it over and over! 'tis by such ways that avarice makes its approaches!

Since eighteen years that I have had my estate in my own hands, I could never prevail with myself either to read over my deeds or examine my principal affairs, which ought of necessity to pass through my knowledge and inspection. 'Tis not a philosophical disdain of worldly and transitory things; my taste is not purified to that degree, and I value them at as great a rate, at least, as they are worth; but 'tis, in truth, an inexcusable and childish laziness and negligence. What would not I rather do than read a contract, tumble over a company of old musty writings, a slave to my own business, or, which is worse, to those of another man, as so many do nowadays to get money? I have nothing dear but care and trouble, and endeavour nothing so much as to be careless and at ease. I had been much fitter, I believe, could it have been without obligation and servitude, to have lived upon another man's fortune than my own; and do not know, when I examine it nearer, whether, according to my humour, what I have to suffer from my affairs and servants, has not in it something more abject, troublesome, and tormenting, than there would be in serving a man better born than myself, that would govern me with a gentle rein and a little at my ease: *Servitus obedientia est fracti animi et abjecti, arbitrio carentis suo.*[1] "Servitude is the obedience of a subdued and abject

[1] Cicero, *Paradox.* v. 1.

mind, wanting its own free will." Crates did worse, who threw himself into the liberty of poverty only to rid himself of the inconveniences and care of his house. This is what I would not do; I hate poverty equally with pain; but I could be content to change the kind of life I live for another, that was meaner and had fewer affairs.

When absent from home, I strip myself of all these thoughts, and should be less concerned for the ruin of a tower, than I am, when present, at the fall of a tile. My mind is easily composed at a distance, but suffers as much as the meanest peasant when I am on the spot. The reins of my bridle being wrong put on, or a strap flapping against my leg, will keep me in check a whole day. I raise my courage well enough against inconveniences; lift up my eyes I cannot.

Sensus! O superi, sensus!

"The senses! O ye gods, the senses!"

I am at home responsible for whatever goes amiss. Few masters (I speak of those of the middling condition, such as mine), if there be any such, they are the happier, can rely so much upon another but that the greatest part of the burden will still lie upon their own shoulders. This takes much from my grace in entertaining strangers, so that I have perhaps detained some rather out of expectation of a good dinner than by my own behaviour, and lose much of the pleasure I ought to reap at my own house from the visits and assembling of my friends. The most ridiculous carriage of a gentleman, in his own house, is to see him bustling about the business of the house, whispering one servant, and looking an angry look at another; it ought insensibly to slide along, and to represent an ordinary current; and I think it equally awkward and unhandsome to talk much to one's guests of their entertainment, whether by way of bragging or excuse. I love order and cleanliness,—

Et cantharus et lanx
Ostendunt mihi me,[1]

"Glasses well rins'd my table always grace,
And dishes shine, in which I see my face,"

more than abundance; and at home have an exact regard to necessity, little to show. If a footman falls to cuffs at another man's house, or stumbles and throws down a dish, you only jest and make a laugh on't; you sleep, whilst the master of the house is arranging a bill of fare, with his steward, for your morrow's entertainment. I speak according as I do myself; not disesteeming, nevertheless, good husbandry in general, nor unconsidering how pleasant a quiet and thrifty management, carried regularly on, is to some natures; and not willing to annex my own errors and inconveniences to the thing, nor to controvert Plato, who looks upon it as the most pleasant employment to every one, "to do his particular affairs, without wrong to another."[2]

When I travel, I have nothing to care for but myself, and the laying out my money; which is disposed of by one single precept; too many things are required to the raking it together; in that I understand nothing. In spending it, I understand a little, and how to get some credit for my expenditure, which is indeed its principal use; but I rely too proudly upon it, which renders it unequal and out of form, and moreover immoderate, in both the one and the other point of view. If it makes a show, if it serves the turn, I indiscreetly let it run, and as indiscreetly tie up my purse-strings, if it does not shine and please me. Whatever it be, whether art or nature, that imprints in us the condition of living with reference to others, it does us much more harm than good; we deprive ourselves of our proper utilities, to accommodate appearances to the common opinion; we care not so much what our being is, as to us, and in reality, as what it is to the public observation. Even the goods of the mind, wisdom itself seems even fruitless to us, if only enjoyed

[1] Horace, *Epist.* i. 5, 23.

[2] Letter 9, *to Archytas.*

by ourselves, and if it produce not itself to the view and approbation of others. There are some men whose gold runs in large streams imperceptibly under ground; while others expose it all in plates and branches; so that in the one farthings are worth crowns, and in the others the converse, the world esteeming its use and value, according to the show. All curious solicitude about riches smells of avarice; even the very disposing of it, with a too punctual and artificial liberality, is not worth a painful solicitude; he that will order his expense to just so much, makes it too pinched and narrow. The keeping or spending are of themselves indifferent things, and receive no colour of good or ill, but according to the application of our will.[1]

The other cause that tempts me out on these journeys, is unsuitableness to the present manners of our state. I could easily console myself with this corruption, in reference to the public interest:—

> Pejoraque sæcula ferri
> Temporibus, quorum sceleri non invenit ipsa
> Nomen, et a nullo possuit natura metallo;[2]

> "'Tis a bad age, worse than the iron times,
> Nature no metal hath to name our crimes;"

but not to my own; I am, in particular, too much oppressed; for in my neighbourhood we are of late, by the long libertinage of our civil wars, grown old in so riotous a form of state,—

> Quippe ubi fas versum atque nefas,[3]

> "Where right and wrong in mad confusion hurl'd,"

that, in earnest, 'tis a wonder how it can subsist:—

> Armati terram exercent, semperque recentes
> Convectare juvat prædas, et vivere rapto.[4]

> "With arms upon their backs they plough the soil,
> And their delight is to subsist by spoil."

[1] In his yearly account of his expenditure, Montaigne put down: "*Item*, for my idle humour, a thousand livres."—*Menagiana.*

[2] Juvenal, xiii. 28.

[3] Virgil, *Georgic* i. 504

[4] *Æneid*, vii. 748.

In fine, I see, by our example, that the society of men is maintained and held together at what price soever; in what condition soever they are placed, they will still close and stick together, moving and heaping up themselves; as uneven bodies, that, shuffled together without order, find of themselves means to unite and settle, often better than they could have been disposed by art. King Philip mustered up a rabble of the most wicked and incorrigible rascals he could pick out, and put them all together into a city he had built for that purpose, which bore their name;[1] I believe that they, even from vices themselves, erected a government amongst them, and a commodious and just society.[2] I see not one action, or three, or a hundred, but manners, in common and received use, so atrocious, especially in inhumanity and treachery, which are to me the worst of all vices, that I have not the heart to think of them without horror; and almost as much admire at, as I detest them; the exercise of these signal villainies carries with it as great signs of vigour and force of soul as of error and disorder. Necessity reconciles and brings men together; and this accidental connection afterwards forms itself into laws; for there have been as savage ones as any human opinion could produce, which nevertheless have maintained their body, with as much health and length of life, as any Plato or Aristotle could invent; and certainly all these descriptions of polities feigned by art, are found to be ridiculous and unfit to be put in practice.

These great and tedious debates about the best form of society, and the most commodious rules to bind us, are debates only proper for the exercise of our wits; as in the arts, there are several subjects which have their being in agitation and controversy, and have no life but there. Such

1 Πονηροπολις, *the city of the wicked.* Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* i. v. 11. Plutarch, *on Curiosity.*

2 "Si j'avais des citoyens à persuader de la nécessité des lois, je leur ferais voir qu'il y'en a partout, même au jeu, qui est un commerce de fripons; même chez les voleurs. *Hanno lor Giove i malandrini ancora.*" Voltaire, *Lettre à d'Alembert*, 1st March, 1764.

an idea of government might be of some value in a new world; but we take a world already made, and formed to certain customs; we do not beget it, as Pyrrha or Cadmus did. By what means soever we may have the privilege to rebuild and reform it anew, we can hardly writhe it from its wonted bent, but we shall break all. Solon, being asked whether he had established the best laws he could for the Athenians; "Yes," said he,[1] "the best they would have received." Varro[2] excuses himself after the same manner: "that if he had to begin to write of religion, he would say what he believed; but being it was already received, he would write more according to custom than according to nature."

The laws of Solon.

Not by opinion, but in truth and reality, the best and most excellent government, for every nation, is that under which it has maintained itself. Her form and essential commodity depends upon custom. We are apt to be displeased at the present condition; but I do nevertheless maintain that to desire the command of a few in a republic, or another sort of government in monarchy, than that already established, is both vice and folly.

What is the best government for every nation.

> Ayme l'estat, tel que tu le veois estre:
> S'il est royal ayme la royauté;
> S'il est de peu, ou bien communauté,
> Ayme l'aussi; car Dieu t'y a fait naistre.[3]

> "The government approve, be't what it will,
> If it be royal, then love monarchy;
> If a republic, yet approve it still,
> For God himself thereto subjected thee."

So wrote the good M. de Pibrac, whom we have lately lost,[4] a man of such excellent wit, such sound opinions, and such gentle manners. This loss, and that, at the same time, which we have had of M. de Foix,[5] are of great importance

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*.
[2] St. Augustin, *de Civit. Dei*, v. 4.
[3] Guy du Faur, Seigneur de Pibrac, *Quatrains contenant préceptes et enseignements utiles pour la vie de l'homme*.
[4] He died 27th May, 1584, aged 55.
[5] Privy counsellor to the King, and ambassador from France to Venice. It was to him that Montaigne dedicated his edition of Boetius's *Vers Français*.

to the crown. I do not know whether there is another couple in France worthy to supply the room of these two Gascons, in sincerity and wisdom, in the King's council. They were both great men in different ways, and certainly, according to the age, rare and excellent, each of them in his kind; but what destiny placed them in these times, men so unsuited and so disproportioned to our corruption and intestine tumults?

Nothing presses so hard upon a state as innovation; change only gives form to injustice and tyranny. When any piece is out of order, it may be propped; one may prevent and take care that the decay and corruption natural to all things do not carry us too far from our beginnings and principles; but to undertake to found so great a mass anew, and to change the foundations of so vast a building, is for them to do, who, to make clean, efface; who would reform particular defects by a universal confusion, and cure diseases by death: *Non tam commutandarum, quam evertendarum rerum cupidi.*[1] "Not so desirous of changing as of overthrowing things." The world is unapt for curing itself; it is so impatient of anything that presses it, that it thinks of nothing but disengaging itself, at what price soever. We see, by a thousand examples, that it generally cures itself to its cost. The discharge of a present evil is no cure, if a general amendment of condition does not follow; the surgeon's end is not only to cut away the dead flesh; that is but the progress of his cure; he has a care, over and above, to fill up the wound with better and more natural flesh, and to restore the member to its due state. Whoever only proposes to himself to remove that which offends him, falls short; for good does not necessarily succeed evil; another evil may succeed, and a worse, as it happened to Cæsar's killers, who brought the republic to such a pass that they had reason to repent their meddling with it. The same has since happened to several others, down to our own times; the French, my contemporaries, know it well enough. All great mutations shake and disorder a state.

[1] Cicero, *Offic.* ii. 1.

Whoever would aim directly at a cure, and would consider of it before he began, would be very willing to withdraw his hands from meddling in it. Pacuvius Calavius corrected the vice of this proceeding, by a notable example. His fellow-citizens were in mutiny against their magistrates; he, being a man of great authority in the city of Capua, found means one day to shut up the senators in the palace, and calling the people together in the market-place, he told them that the day was now come wherein, at full liberty, they might revenge themselves on the tyrants, by whom they had been so long oppressed, and whom he had now, all alone and unarmed, at his mercy; and advised that they should call them out one by one by lot, and should particularly determine of every one, causing whatever should be decreed to be immediately executed; with this caution, that they should at the same time depute some honest man in the place of him that was condemned, to the end there might be no vacancy in the senate. They had no sooner heard the name of one senator, but a great cry of universal dislike was raised up against him: "I see," says Pacuvius,[1] "we must get rid of him; he is a wicked fellow; let us look out a good one in his room." Immediately there was a profound silence, every one being at a stand who to choose. But one, more impudent than the rest, having named his man, there arose yet a greater consent of voices against him, a hundred imperfections being laid to his charge, and as many just reasons being presently given why he should not stand. These contradictory humours growing hot, it fared worse with the second senator and the third, there being as much disagreement in the election of the new, as consent in the putting out of the old. In the end, growing weary of this bustle to no purpose, they began, some one way and some another, to steal out of the assembly; every one carrying back this resolution in his mind, that the oldest and best known evil was ever more supportable than one that was new and untried.

[1] Livy, xxiii. 3.

To see how miserably we are torn in pieces, (for what have we not done?

> Eheu! cicatricum et sceleris pudet,
> Fratrumque: quid nos dura refugimus,
> Ætas? Quid intactum nefasti
> Liquimus? Unde manus inventus
> Metu deorum continuit? quibus
> Pepercit aris?[1]

> "How oft have Roman youth imbru'd
> Their savage hands in social blood!
> What has this iron age not dar'd?
> What gods rever'd? What altars spar'd?"

I do not presently conclude:—

> Ipsa si velit Salus,
> Servare prorsus non potest hanc familiam:[2]

> "Would safety's self its best care have,
> This family it cannot save:")

we are not, however, perhaps at the last gasp. The conservation of states is a thing that in all likelihood surpasses our understanding; a civil government is, as Plato says,[3] a mighty and powerful thing, and hard to be dissolved; it endures against mortal and intestine diseases, against the injury of unjust laws, against tyranny, the corruption and ignorance of magistrates, and the license and sedition of the people. We compare ourselves in all our fortunes to what is above us, and still look towards the better; but let us measure ourselves with what is below us, and there is no condition so miserable, wherein a man may not find a thousand examples that will administer consolation. 'Tis our vice that we more unwillingly look upon what is above, than willingly on what is below. Solon used to say,[4] that "whoever would make a heap of all the ills together, there is no one would not rather choose to bear away the ills he has, than to come to an equal division with all other men, from that heap, and take with him thence so much as would, upon the dividend, fall to

[1] Horace, *Od.* i. 35, 33.
[2] Terence, *Adelph.* iv. 7, 43.
[3] *Republic*, viii. 2.
[4] Val. Max. vii. 2. *Ext.* 2.

his particular share." Our government is indeed very sick; but there have been others sicker, without dying. The gods play at tennis with us, and bandy us every way:—

Enimvero dii nos homines quasi pilas habent.[1]

The state of Rome, and its diverse forms.

The stars have fatally destined the state of Rome for an example of what they could do in this kind; in it is comprised all the forms and adventures that affect a state; all that order or disorder, good or evil fortune can do. Who, then, can despair of his condition, seeing the shocks and commotions wherewith she was tumbled and tossed, and yet withstood them all? If the extent of dominion be the health of a state (which I by no means think it is), and Isocrates pleases me, when he instructs Nicocles not to envy princes who have large dominions, but those who know how to preserve these which have fallen to them, that of Rome was never so sound as when it was most sick. The worst of her forms was the most fortunate; one can hardly discern any image of government under the first emperors; it was the most horrible and tumultuous confusion that can be imagined; it endured it, notwithstanding, and therein continued, not only preserving a monarchy limited within its own bounds, but so many nations, so differing, so remote, so ill affected, so confusedly commanded, and so unjustly conquered:—

The horrible confusion under the first emperors.

Nec gentibus ullis
Commodat in populum, terræ pelagique potentem,
Invidiam fortuna suam.[2]

"But to no foreign arms would Fortune yet
Lend her own envy against Rome so great,
That over nations and mighty kings,
O'er lands and seas, she stretch'd her eagle's wings."

Everything that totters does not fall. The contexture of so great a body holds by more nails than one; it holds even by its antiquity, like old buildings, from which the foundations

[1] Plautus, *Captivi*, Prologue, verse 22. [2] Lucan, i. 82.

are worn away by time, without rough-cast or cement, which yet live and support themselves by their own weight,—

> Nec jam validis radicibus hærens,
> Pondere tuta suo est.[1]
>
> "Like an old lofty oak, that heretofore
> Great conquerors' spoils and sacred trophies bore,
> Stands firm in his own weight."

Moreover, 'tis not rightly to go to work to reconnoitre only the flank and the fosse, to judge of the security of a place; it must be examined which way approaches can be made to it, and in what condition the assailant is; few vessels sink with their own weight, and without some exterior violence. Let us every way cast our eyes; everything about us totters; in all the great states, both of Christendom and elsewhere, that are known to us, if you will but look, you will there see evident threats of alteration and ruin:—

> Et sua sunt illis incommoda, parque per omnes
> Tempestas.
>
> "We all alike in the world's troubles share,
> And the rude tempest rages everywhere."

Astrologers may very well, as they do, warn us of great revolutions and imminent mutations; their prophecies are present and palpable, they need not go to heaven to foretell this. There is not only consolation to be extracted from this universal combination of ills and menaces, but, moreover, some hopes of the continuation of our state, forasmuch as naturally nothing falls, where all does; an universal sickness is particular health; conformity is a quality antagonist to dissolution. For my part I despair not, and fancy that I perceive ways to save us:—

> Deus hæc fortasse benigna
> Reducet in sedem vice.[2]
>
> "God will, perchance,
> Them to their seats with happy change advance."

Who knows but God will have it happen, as it does in human

[1] Lucan, i. 138.

[2] Horace, *Epod.* xiii. 7.

bodies that purge and restore themselves to a better state by long and grievous maladies, which give them a more entire and perfect health than what they took from them? That which weighs the most with me, is that, in reckoning the symptoms of our ill, I see as many natural ones, and those which heaven sends us and properly its own, as of those that our disorder and human imprudence contribute to it; the very stars seem to declare that we have already continued long enough, and beyond the ordinary term. And this, too, afflicts me, that the mischief which most threatens us is not an alteration in the entire and solid mass, but its dissipation and divulsion; the thing most to be feared.

I fear, in these reveries of mine, the treachery of my memory, lest by inadvertence, it should make me write the same thing twice. I hate to examine myself, and never review, but very unwillingly, what has once escaped my pen. Now I here set down nothing new; these are common thoughts; and having peradventure, conceived them a hundred times, I am afraid I have set them down somewhere else already.

Repetition troublesome.

Repetition is everywhere troublesome, though it were in Homer; but 'tis ruinous in things that have only a superficial and transitory show. I do not love inculcation even in the most profitable things, as in Seneca; and the practice of his Stoical school displeases me, of repeating, upon every subject, and at length, the principles and presuppositions that serve in general, and always to reallege anew common and universal reasons.

My memory grows worse and worse every day:—

> Pocula Lethæos ut si ducentia somnos
> Arente fauce traxerim.[1]

> "As if, of Lethe drinking deep
> With thirsty lips, I'd fallen asleep."

I must be fain for the time to come (for hitherto, thanks be to God, nothing has happened much amiss), whereas others

[1] Horace, *Epod.* xiv. 8.

seek time and opportunity to think of what they have to say, to avoid all preparation, for fear of tying myself to some obligation upon which I must be forced to insist. To be tied and bound to a thing puts me quite out, and especially where I have to depend upon so weak an instrument as my memory. I never could read this story without being offended at it, with, as it were, a personal and natural resentment; Lyncestes, accused of conspiracy against Alexander, the day that he was brought out before the army, according to the custom, to be heard in his defence, had prepared a studied speech, of which, haggling and stammering, he pronounced some words. As he was becoming more perplexed, and struggling with his memory, and trying to recollect himself, the soldiers, that stood nearest, killed him with their spears, looking upon his confusion and silence as a confession of his guilt;[1] for having had so much leisure to prepare himself in prison, they concluded that it was not his memory that failed him, but that his conscience tied up his tongue and stopped his mouth; very fine, indeed! The place, the spectators, the expectation, would astound a man, even were there no object in his mind but the ambition to speak well; but what, when 'tis an harangue upon which his life depends?

Lyncestes killed with thrusts of pikes by Alexander's soldiers.

For my part, the very being tied to what I am to say, is enough to loose me from it. When I wholly commit and refer myself to my memory, I lay so much stress upon it that it sinks under me; and I overwhelm it with the burden. The more I trust to it, the more do I put myself out of my own power, so much as to find it in my own countenance; and have sometimes been very much put to it to conceal the slavery wherein I was bound; whereas my design is to manifest in speaking a perfect nonchalance, both of face and accent, and casual and unpremeditated motions, as rising from present occasions, choosing rather to say nothing to purpose, than to show that I came prepared to speak well, a thing es-

[1] Quint. Curt. vii. 1.

pecially unbecoming a man of my profession, and of too great obligation on him that cannot retain much. The preparation begets a great deal more expectation than it will satisfy; a man often very absurdly strips himself to his doublet, to leap no further than he would have done in his gown: *Nihil est his, qui placere volunt, tam adversarium quam expectatio.*[1] "Nothing is so great an adversary to those who make it their business to please, as expectation." It is recorded of the orator Curio, that when he proposed the division of his oration into three or four parts, it often happened either that he forgot some one, or added one or two more.[2] I have always avoided falling into this inconvenience, having always hated these promises and announcements, not only out of distrust of my memory, but also because this method relishes too much of the artificial: *Simpliciora militares decent.*[3] "Simplicity becomes warriors." 'Tis enough that I have promised, to myself, never to take upon me to speak in a place where I owe respect; for as to that sort of speaking, when a man reads his speech, besides that it is very absurd, it is a mighty disadvantage to those who naturally could give it a grace by action; and to rely upon the mercy of the readiness of my invention, I will much less do it; 'tis heavy and perplexed, and such as would never furnish me in sudden and important necessities.

Permit, reader, this essay its course also, and this third sitting to finish my picture. I add, but I correct not;[4] first because I conceive that a man having once parted with his labours to the world, has no further right to them; let him do better if he can, in some new undertaking, but not adulterate what he has already sold. Of such dealers nothing should

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 4.
[2] Id. *Brutus*, c. 60.
[3] Quint. *Inst. Orat.* xi. 1.
[4] Yet the various editions of the Essays, printed under the superintendence of Montaigne, present an infinite variety of readings, and the two corrected copies he left behind him have in every chapter alterations, omissions, and additions, differing not only from the printed copies, but from each other, in material respects. Indeed, he himself admits (book ii. c. 11) "En mes écripts mesmes, je ne retreuve pas tousjours l'air de ma premiere imagination: je ne scais ce que j'ay voulu dire; et m'eschaulde souvent a corriger et y mettre un nouveau sens, pour avoir perdu le premier, qui valoit mieulx."

be bought till after they are dead. Let them well consider what they do before they produce them to light; who hurries them? My book is always the same, saving that upon every new edition, that the buyer may not go away quite empty, I take leave to add, which I can easily do, for 'tis but a piece of ill-pointed mosaic-work, some few insignificant bits, over and above; these are but over weight, that do not damage the original form of these Essays, but, by a little ambitious subtlety, give a kind of particular value to every one of those that follow. Thence, however, there will easily happen some transposition of chronology; my stories taking their place according to their patness, and not always according to the age.

Secondly, because that, for what concerns myself, I fear to lose by the change; my understanding does not always go forward, it goes backward too. I do not much less suspect my fancies for being the second or the third, than for being the first, or present, or past. We often correct ourselves as foolishly as we do others. I am grown older by a great many years, since my first publication, which was in the year 1580;[1] but I very much doubt whether I am grown an inch the wiser. I now, and I anon, are two several persons; but whether the better now, or anon, I am not able to determine. It were a fine thing to be old, if we only travelled towards improvement; but 'tis a drunken, stumbling, reeling, ill-favoured motion, like that of reeds, which the air casually waves to and fro at pleasure. Antiochus in his youth vigorously wrote in favour of the Academy; in his old age he wrote against it. Would not which of these two soever I should follow, be still Antiochus? After having established the uncertainty, to go about to establish the certainty, of human opinions, was it not to establish doubt, and not certainty? and to promise that, he had yet another age to live, he would be always upon the terms of altering his judgment, not so much for the better, as for a change?

1 The edition of 1582 has it: "I am grown older by eight years since my first publication; but I doubt," &c.

The public favour has given me a little more confidence than I expected; but what I most fear is lest I should overgorge the world; I had rather of the two nettle my reader than tire him, as a learned man of my time has done. Praise is always pleasing, let it come from whom or upon what account it will; yet ought a man to understand why he is commended, that he may know how to keep up the same reputation still. Even imperfections may meet with commendation from some one or other; the vulgar and common esteem seldom hits right; and I am much mistaken if, amongst the writings of my time, the worst are not those which have most gained the popular applause. For my part, I confess my thanks to those good-natured men who deign to take my weak endeavours in good part; the faults of the workmanship are nowhere so apparent as in a matter which of itself has no recommendation. Blame not me, reader, for those that slip in here by the fancy or inadvertency of others; every hand, every artisan, contribute their own materials. I neither concern myself with orthography (and only care to have it after the old way) nor punctuation, being very inexpert both in the one and the other. Where they wholly break the sense, I am very little concerned, for they at least discharge me; but where they substitute a false one, as they so often do, and wrest me to their conception, they ruin me. Therefore, when a sentence is not strong enough for my proportion, my readers ought, in civility, to reject it as none of mine. Whoever shall know how lazy I am, and how indulgent to my own humour, will easily believe that I had rather write as many more essays, than be bound to revise these over again for so childish a correction.

Orthography and pointing despised.

I was saying just now, that, being planted in the very depth of this new religion, I am not only deprived of any great familiarity with men of other kind of manners than my own, and of other opinions, by which they hold together, as by a tie that supersedes all other obligations; but moreover, I do not live without danger amongst men to whom all things are

equally lawful, and of whom the most part cannot offend the laws more than they have already done; whence the extremest degree of license proceeds. All the particular circumstances respecting me being summed up together, I do not find one man of my country who pays so dear for the defence of our laws, both in costs and damages (as the lawyers say), as myself; and some there are who vapour and brag of their zeal and constancy, that, if things were justly weighed, do much less than I. My house, as one that has ever been open and free to all comers, and civil to all (for I could never persuade myself to make a garrison of war of it, a condition I would keep as far from my own neighbourhood as possible), has sufficiently merited a popular kindness, and so that it would be a hard matter to insult over me upon my own dunghill; and I look upon it as a wonderful and exemplary thing, that it yet continues a virgin from blood and plunder during so long a storm, and so many neighbouring revolutions and tumults. For, to confess the truth, it had been possible enough for a man of my complexion to have shaken hands with any one constant and continued form whatever; but the contrary invasions and incursions, alternations and vicissitudes of fortune round about me, have hitherto rather exasperated than calmed and mollified the humour of the country, and involve me in invincible difficulties and dangers.

I escape, 'tis true, but am annoyed that it is more by chance, and something of my own prudence, than by justice, and am not satisfied to be out of the protection of the laws, and under any other safeguard than theirs. As matters stand, I live above one half by the favour of others, which is an untoward obligation. I do not like to owe my safety, either to the generosity or affection of great persons, who are content to allow me my liberty, or to the obliging manners of my predecessors, or my own; for what if I was another kind of man? If my deportment, and the frankness of my conversation or relationship, oblige my neighbours, 'tis cruel that they should acquit themselves of that obligation in only permitting me to

live, and that they may say, "We allow him the free liberty of having divine service read in his own private chapel, when all churches round about are deserted by us, and allow him the use of his goods, and the fruition of his life, as one that protects our wives and cattle in time of need." For my house has for many descents shared in the reputation of Lycurgus the Athenian,[1] who was the general feoffee and guardian of the purses of his fellow-citizens. Now I hold that a man should live as a matter of right, and by authority, and not either by recompense or favour. How many gallant men have rather chosen to lose their lives than to abandon their duty? I hate to subject myself to any sort of obligation, but, above all, to that which binds me by the duty of honour. I think nothing so dear as what is given me, and that because my will lies at pawn under the title of gratitude, and more willingly accept of services that are to be sold, being of opinion that for the last I give nothing but money, while for the other I give myself.

Lycurgus the general trustee for all his fellow-citizens.

The knot that binds me by the laws of courtesy pinches me more than that of legal constraint, and I am much more at ease when bound by a scrivener than by myself. Is it not reason that my conscience should be much more engaged when men rely simply upon it? In a bond, my faith owes nothing, because it has nothing lent it. Let them trust to the security they have taken, out of me; I had much rather break the wall of a prison, and the laws themselves, than my own word. I am nice, even to superstition, in keeping my promises, and therefore upon all occasions have a care to make them uncertain and conditional. To those of no great moment I add the jealousy of my own rule, to make them weight; it racks and oppresses me with its own interest. Even in actions that are wholly my own, and free, if I once say it, I conceive that I have bound myself, and that delivering it to the knowledge of

Promises to be strictly observed.

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 1.

another I have positively enjoined it my own performance; methinks I promise it if I but say it, and, therefore, I am not apt to say much in that way. The sentence that I pass upon myself is more severe than that of a judge who only considers the common obligation; but my conscience looks upon it with a more severe and penetrating eye. I lag in those duties to which I should be compelled if I did not go: *Hoc ipsum ita justum est, quod recte fit, si est voluntarium.*[1] "Even that which is well done is only just, when 'tis voluntary." If the action has not some splendour of liberty, it has neither grace nor honour:—

> Quod me jus cogit, vix voluntate impetrent:[2]
>
> "That which the laws have power to constrain,
> They from my will would hardly e'er obtain:"

where necessity draws me, I love to let my will take its own course: *Quia quidquid imperio cogitur, exigenti magis quam præstanti acceptum refertur.*[3] "For whatever is compelled by power is more imputed to him that exacts than to him that performs." I know some who follow this notion even to injustice, who will sooner give than restore, sooner lend than pay, and will do them the least good to whom they are most obliged. I do not go such lengths.

I so much love to disengage and disobligate myself, that I have sometimes looked upon ingratitude, affronts, and indignities, which I have received from those to whom, either by nature or accident, I was bound in some duty of friendship, as an advantage, taking this occasion of their ill usage, for an acquittance and discharge of so much of my debt. And though I still continue to pay them all the outward offices of public reason, I, notwithstanding, find a great saving in doing that upon the account of justice which I did upon the score of affection, and in a little easing myself of the former solicitude and attention of my inward will: *Est prudentis sustinere,*

[1] Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 9.
[2] Terence, *Adelph.* iii. 5, 44. The text has, *Quod vos jus cogit, vix voluntate impetret.*
[3] Val. Max. ii. 2, 6.

ut currum, sic impetum benevolentiæ:[1] "'Tis the part of a wise man to keep a curb, as upon a swift chariot, upon the precipitation of his benevolence," which is in me too urging and pressing where I take, at least for a man who loves not to be strained at all; and this husbanding my friendship serves me for a sort of consolation in the imperfections of those in whom I am concerned. I am sorry they are not so much what I could wish they were; but so it is, that I save something in my application and engagement towards them. I admit of a man's being less fond of his child, for having a scaldhead, or being crooked, and not only when he is ill conditioned, but also when he is unfortunate and ill-formed (for God himself has abated that from his value and natural estimation), provided he carry himself in this coldness of affection with moderation and exact justice. Proximity lessens not defects with me, but rather makes them greater.

After all, according to what I understand of the science of benefit and gratitude, which is a subtle science and of great use, I know no person more free and less indebted than I am at this hour. What I do owe is simply to common and natural obligations; as to anything else, no man is more absolutely clear:—

> Nec sunt mihi nota potentum
> Munera.[2]
> "The gifts of great men are to me unknown."

Princes give me a great deal, if they take nothing from me; and do me good enough, if they do me no harm; that's all I ask. Oh, how I am obliged to Almighty God that it has pleased him I should receive all I have immediately from his bounty, and that he has reserved all my obligation particularly to himself! How constantly do I beg of his holy compassion that I may never owe any essential thanks to any one! O happy liberty wherein I have thus far lived! May it continue with me to the last! I endeavour to have no need of any one: *In me omnis spes est mihi:*[3] "All my hope

[1] Cicero, *de Amicit.* c. 17.
[2] *Æneid*, xii. 519.
[3] Terence, *Adelph.* iii. 5, 9 The text has, *In te spes omnis, Hegio, nobis sita est.*

is in myself;" 'tis what every one may do in himself, but more easily they whom God has placed in a condition exempted from natural and urgent necessities. It is a wretched and dangerous thing to depend upon others. Ourselves, which is the most just and safest refuge, are not sufficiently assured. I have nothing mine but myself; and yet the possession is in part defective and borrowed. I fortify myself both in courage, which is the strongest assistant, and also in fortune, therein to have wherewith to satisfy myself, though everything else should forsake me. Eleus Hippias [1] did not merely furnish himself with knowledge, that he might at need cheerfully retire from all other company to enjoy the Muses; not merely with the knowledge of philosophy to teach his soul to be contented with itself, and bravely to dispense with outward conveniences, when fate would have it so; he was moreover so careful as to learn cookery, to shave himself, to make his own clothes, his own shoes, and drawers, to provide for all his necessities in himself, and to make himself independent of the assistance of others. One more freely and cheerfully enjoys borrowed conveniences, when it is not an enjoyment forced and constrained by need; and when one has in his own will and fortune wherewithal to live without them. I know myself very well, but 'tis hard to imagine any so pure liberality of another towards me, any so free and frank hospitality, that would not appear to me a disgrace, tyrannical, and tainted with reproach, if necessity had reduced me to it. As giving is an ambitious and authoritative quality, so is accepting a quality of submission; witness the injurious and quarrelsome refusal that Bajazet made of the presents that Temir [2] sent him; and those that were offered in the behalf of the Emperor Solyman to the Emperor of Calicut, were so much disdained by him, that he not only rudely rejected them, saying that neither he nor any of his predecessors had ever been wont to take, and that it was their

[1] Or rather, *Hippias of Elis*. See Cicero, *de Oratore*, iii. 32.

[2] *Timur*, or *Tamerlane*.

office to give; but moreover caused the ambassadors sent for that purpose to be put into a dungeon. When Thetis, says Aristotle,[1] flatters Jupiter, when the Lacedemonians flatter the Athenians, they do not put them in mind of the good they have done them, which is always odious, but of the benefits they have received from them. Such as I see so frequently employ every one in their affairs, and thrust themselves into so much obligation, would never do it, did they but relish the sweetness of a pure liberty as I do, and did they but weigh, as wise men should, the burden of obligation; 'tis sometimes, perhaps, fully returned, but 'tis never dissolved. 'Tis a miserable slavery to a man that loves to be at full liberty in every way. My acquaintance, both those above and those below me, can say whether they have ever known a man less importuning, soliciting, entreating, and pressing upon others than I. And if I am a degree beyond all modern example in this respect, 'tis no great wonder, so many parts of my manners contributing to it; a little natural pride, an impatience of being refused, the contraction of my desires and designs, inaptitude for business, and my most beloved qualities, idleness and freedom; by all these together, I have conceived a mortal hatred of being obliged to any other than myself. I readily lay out all I can rap and wring of my own, rather than employ the bounty of another, in any important or light occasion or necessity whatsoever. My friends strangely annoy me when they ask me to ask a third person anything; and I think it costs me little less to disengage him who is indebted to me, by making use of him, than to engage myself to one that owes me nothing. This condition being removed, and this other, that they require of me nothing of any great trouble or care (for I have declared open war against all trouble), I am easily entreated, and ready to do every one the best service I can.[2] But I have

[1] *Ethics*, iv. 3. See also Homer, *Iliad*, i. 508.

[2] The edition of 1588 adds here: "I have ever willingly sought every occasion to do a kindness, and to attach others to me; and methinks one cannot make a better use of the means one has; but I have still," &c.

still more avoided receiving, than sought occasion of giving, and this, moreover, according to Aristotle,[1] is much more easy. My fortune has allowed me but little to do others good withal; and the little it can afford is put into a pretty close hand. Had I been born a great person, I should have been ambitious to have made myself beloved, not feared or admired; shall I more impudently express it? I should as much have endeavoured to please as to do good. Cyrus very wisely, and by the mouth of a great captain and still greater philosopher,[2] prefers his goodness and well-doing much before his valour and warlike conquests; and the elder Scipio, wherever he would raise himself in people's esteem, sets a higher value upon his affability and humanity than on his prowess and victories, and has always this glorious saying in his mouth: "That he had given his enemies as much occasion to love him as his friends." I would say, then, that if a man must needs owe something, it ought to be by a more legitimate title than that whereof I am speaking, to which the necessity of this miserable war compels me; and not in so great a debt as that of my entire preservation; this overwhelms me.

I have a thousand times gone to bed in my own house, with an apprehension that I should be betrayed and murdered that very night; compounding with fortune that it might be without terror, and with quick dispatch; and after my paternoster have cried out,—

> Impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit?[3]
>
> "Shall impious soldiers have these new-plough'd lands?"

But what remedy? 'tis the place of my birth, and of most of my ancestors; here they have fixed their affection and their name. We inure ourselves to whatever we are accustomed to; and, in so miserable a condition as ours is, custom is a great bounty of nature, which benumbs our senses to the sufferance of many evils. A civil war has this in it worse

[1] *Ethics*, ix. 7.
[2] Xenophon, *Cyropæd.* viii. 4, 4.
[3] Virg. *Eclog.* i. 71.

than other wars, to make each of us stand sentinel in his own house:—

> Quam miserum, portâ vitam muroque tueri,
> Vixque suæ tutum viribus esse domus![1]

> "To one's own walls and gates, 'tis wretched, sure,
> To trust one's life, yet scarce to be secure."

'Tis a grievous extremity for a man to be jostled in what should be the quiet of his own house. The country where I live is always the first in arms, and the last that lays them down, and where there never is absolute peace:—

> Tum quoque cum pax est, trepidant formidine belli.[2]

> Quoties pacem fortuna lacessit,
> Hac iter est bellis . . . Melius, Fortuna, dedisses,
> Orbe sub Eoo sedem, gelidaque sub Arcto,
> Errantesque domos.[3]

> "E'en when at peace, we're ever fearing war."

> "Elsewhere, when all
> The world's at peace, we are the spoil of war,
> The first that are invaded; happier far
> Might we have lived in farthest north or east,
> Or wandering tents of Scythia."

I sometimes extract the means to fortify myself against these considerations, from carelessness and indolence, which also in some sort bring us on to resolution. It frequently happens to me to imagine and expect mortal dangers with a kind of pleasure; I stupidly plunge myself headlong into death,[4]

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* iv. 1, 69.
[2] Id. *ib.* iii. 10, 67.
[3] Lucan, i. 255 and 256, 251, &c.
[4] The authors of the Port Royal *Logic*, part iii. c. 20, sect. 6, in quoting this passage, are very indignant with Montaigne for his resignation amidst the dangers that surrounded him; but to comprehend the author's true meaning here, the words must be considered with regard to their necessary connection with what goes before. Montaigne represents himself as surrounded in his house by gangs of banditti, of every side, licensed by war to commit all manner of crimes with impunity. In such a situation, where he is always in danger of having his throat cut, and in a mortal dread of seeing himself every moment at the mercy of these villains, he one while fancies himself actually in their hands, and feeling a kind of pleasure to be at last delivered thereby on a sudden from the continual anguish which rendered his life insupportable. Full of these ideas he stupidly plunges himself headlong, as he says, into death, without taking a view of it, as into a dark and deep vortex, which swallows him up, &c: Which is as much as to say, that by taking his resolution he expects, when he least thinks of it, to be in that state of surprise and horror from the barbarity of those villains who shall come to knock him on the head, or cut his throat, before he has time to look about him. The images which Montaigne here makes use of are lively but innocent, and very natural, and such as no fair critic need find fault with.—*Coste.*

without considering or taking a view of it, as into a silent and obscure abyss, which swallows me up at one leap, and involves me in an instant in a profound sleep, without any sense of pain. And in these short and violent deaths, the consequence that I foresee administers more consolation to me than the effect of fear. They say that as life is not the better for being long, so death is better for not being long. I do not so much evade being dead, as I enter into confidence with dying. I envelop and shelter myself in the storm, that is to blind and carry me away with fury, by a sudden and insensible attack. Moreover, what if it should fall out that, as some gardeners say, as roses and violets spring more odoriferous near garlic and onions, by reason that the last suck and imbibe all the ill odour of the earth; that these depraved natures should also attract all the malignity of my air and climate, and render me so much the better and purer by their vicinity, that I should not lose all! That cannot be; but there may be something in this, that goodness is more beautiful and attractive when it is rare; and that contrariety and diversity fortifies and shuts up well-doing within itself, and enflames it by the jealousy of opposition and glory. The robbers, of their special favour, have no particular aim at me; no more have I to them; I should have my hands too full. Like consciences are lodged under several sorts of robes, like cruelty, disloyalty, and rapine; and much the worse and baser, as more secure and concealed under the colour of the laws. I less hate an open and professed injury than one that is clandestine and treacherous; an enemy in arms than an enemy in a gown. Our fever has seized upon a body that is not much the worse for it; there was fire before, and now 'tis broke out into a flame. The noise is greater, the evil much the same. I generally answer such as ask me the reason of my travels: "That I know very well what I fly from, but not what I seek." If they tell me I may be as ill among strangers, and that their manners are no better than ours, I first reply that that is hard to be believed,—

Tam multæ scelerum facies![1]

"Crime in so many shapes abounds!"

secondly, that it is always gain to change an ill condition for one that is uncertain; and that the ills of others ought not to concern us so much as our own.

The commendation of Paris.

I will not here omit that I never mutiny so much against France, that I am not perfectly friends with Paris; that city has ever had my heart from my infancy; and it has fallen out, as of excellent things, that the more beautiful cities I have seen since, the more the beauty of this does still win upon my affection; I love it by itself, and more in its own native being, than in all the pomp of foreign embellishments; I love it tenderly, even to its warts and blemishes; I am not a Frenchman but by this great city, great in people, great in the felicity of her situation, but above all, great and incomparable in variety and diversity of commodities; the glory of France, and one of the most noble ornaments of the world. May God keep her free from our divisions, entire and united! I hold her to be sufficiently defended from all other violence; I give her caution, that of all sorts of parties that will be the worst that shall set her in disorder; and I have no fears for her but from herself; and certainly I have as much fear for her as for any other part of this state. Whilst she shall continue, I shall never want a retreat where I may live, sufficient to make me amends for parting with any other retreat whatever.

Montaigne considered all nations as his countrymen.

Not because Socrates said so, but because it is in truth my own humour, and perhaps not without some excess, I look upon all men as my compatriots; and embrace a Polander as heartily as a Frenchman, preferring the universal and common tie to the national tie. I am not much taken with the sweetness of a native air; acquaintance wholly new, and wholly my own, appear to me full as good as common and accidental ones with our

[1] Virgil, *Georg.* i. 506.

neighbours; friendships that are purely of our own acquiring, ordinarily carry it above those to which the communication of the clime, or of blood, oblige us. Nature has placed us in the world free and unbound; we imprison ourselves in certain narrow limits, like the kings of Persia, who obliged themselves to drink no other water but that of the river Choaspes,[1] foolishly quitting claim to their right of usage of all other streams, and as to what concerned themselves, dried up all the other rivers of the world. What Socrates says towards his end, that he looked upon a sentence of banishment as worse than a sentence of death, I shall, I think, never be either so broken, or so strictly habituated to my own country, to be of that opinion; these celestial lives have images enough, that I embrace more by esteem than affection; and they have some also so elevated and extraordinary, that I cannot embrace them even by esteem, forasmuch as I cannot conceive them; this humour was very tender in a man that thought the whole world was his city; it is true that he disdained travel, and had hardly ever set his foot out of the Attic territories. That he complained of the money his friends offered to save his life, and that he refused to come out of prison by the mediation of others, not to disobey the laws, in a time when they were otherwise so corrupt; these examples are of the first kind for me; of the second there are others that I could find in the same person; many of these rare examples surpass the force of my action; but some of them, moreover, surpass the force of my judgment.

Besides these reasons, travel is, in my opinion, a very improving thing; the soul is there continually employed in observing new and unknown things; and I do not know, as I have often said, a better school wherein to model life, than by constantly setting before it the diversity of so many other lives, fancies, and customs, and to make it relish so perpetual a variety of the forms of human nature. The body is therein

[1] Plutarch, *On Exile*. Ælian, *Hist. Var.* xii. 40. Pliny, xxxi. 3.

neither idle nor overwrought; and that moderate agitation puts it in breath. I can keep on horseback, tormented with the stone as I am, without alighting or being weary, eight or ten hours together,

Vires ultra sortemque senectæ:[1]

"Beyond the strength and common lot of age:"

no season is distasteful to me, but the parching heat of a scorching sun; for the umbrellas made use of in Italy, ever since the time of the ancient Romans, more burden a man's arm than they relieve his head. I would fain know what plan the Persians had so long ago, and in the infancy of luxury, for creating fresh air, and having shade where they would, as Xenophon reports they did. I love rain and dirt, like a duck. Change of air and climate never affects me; every sky is alike; I am only troubled with inward alterations, which I breed within myself, and those are not so frequent in travel. I am hard to be got out; but being once upon the road, I hold out as well as the best; I take as much pains in little as in great undertakings, and to equip myself for a short trip, if but to visit a neighbour, as for a regular journey. I have learned to travel after the Spanish fashion, and to make but one stage of my day's journey; and in excessive heats, I always travel by night, from sunset to sunrise. The other method of baiting by the way, in haste and hurry gobbling up a dinner, is, especially in short days, very inconvenient. My horses are all the better for it; never any horse failed me that was able to hold out the first day's journey; I water them at every brook I meet, and have only a care they have so much way to go before I come to my inn, as will warm the water in their bellies. My unwillingness to rise in a morning gives my servants leisure to dine at their ease before they set out; for my own part, I never eat too late; my appetite comes to me while eating, and not otherwise; I am never hungry but at table.

The Spanish way of travelling.

[1] *Æneid*, vi. 114.

Some of my friends blame me for continuing this travelling humour, being married and old; but they are out there; for it is the best time to leave a man's house, when he has put it into a way of going on without him, and settled such an economy as corresponds to its former government; 'tis much greater imprudence to abandon it to a less faithful housekeeper, and who will be less solicitous to provide for the family, and look after your affairs.

The most useful and the most honourable accomplishment of a mother of a family.

The most useful and honourable knowledge and employment for the mother of a family, is the science of good housewifery. I see some that are covetous, but very few that are economical; 'tis the supreme quality of a woman, and what a man ought to seek after before any other, as the only dowry that must ruin or preserve our houses. Let men say what they will, according to the experience I have learned, I require in married women the economical virtue above all others; I put my wife to't as a concern of her own, leaving her by my absence the whole government of my affairs. I see, and am vexed to see it, in several families I know, monsieur, about midday, come home all dirt and disorder, from trotting about on his affairs; when madame is still pouncing and tricking herself up in her closet; this is for queens to do, and that's a question too; 'tis ridiculous and unjust that the laziness of our wives should be maintained with our sweat and labour. No man, as much as in me lies, shall have a more free and liberal, a more quiet and free fruition of his estate than I. If the husband bring matter, nature herself will that the wife find the form.

The conjugal friendship grows warm by absence.

As to the duties of conjugal friendship, that some think to be weakened by absence, I am quite of another opinion. It is, on the contrary, an intelligence that easily cools by too continual and assiduous exercise. Every other woman appears graceful, and we all find by experience that being continually together is not so pleasant as to part for a time and meet again. These

interruptions give me renewed affection for my family, and render my own house more agreeable to me; change warms my appetite, now to the one and now to the other. I know that the arms of friendship are long enough to reach from one end of the world to the other, and especially this, where there is a continual communication of offices, that rouse the obligation and remembrance. The Stoics say, indeed, that there is so great connection and relation amongst wise men, that he who dines in France nourishes his companion in Egypt; and that whoever does but hold out his finger, in what part of the world soever, all the wise men upon the habitable earth feel themselves assisted by it.[1] Fruition and possession principally appertain to the imagination; it more fervently and constantly embraces what it is in quest of, than what we hold in our arms. Let a man but consider, and cast up his daily thoughts, and he will find that he is most absent from his friend when in his company; his presence relaxes your attention, and gives your thoughts liberty to absent themselves, at every turn and upon every occasion. When I am at Rome, I keep and govern my house, and the conveniences I there left; I see my walls rise, my trees shoot, and my revenue increase or decrease, very near as well as when I am at home:—

> Ante oculos errat domus, errat forma locorum.[2]
>
> "Still fondly I behold, with fancy's eye,
> My house and places that around it lie."

If we enjoy nothing but what we touch, we may say farewell to the money in our closets, and to our sons, when they are gone a hunting. We will have them nearer to us. Are they in the garden? Is that far off? Is it half a day's journey? Is it ten leagues? Is that far or near? If near, what is eleven, twelve, or thirteen? and so by degrees. In earnest, if there be a woman who can tell her husband what

[1] The example of the finger stretched out is in Plutarch, *On the Common Conceptions of the Stoics;* but as to the economical arrangement for feeding two persons on one man's meal, it is apparently a fancy of Montaigne's own

[2] Ovid, *Trist.* iii. 4, 57.

step ends the near, and what step begins the remote, I would advise her to stop him between them :—

> Excludat jurgia finis . . . . .
> Utor permisso; caudæque pilos ut equinæ
> Paulatim, vello, et demo unum, demo etiam unum,
> Dum cadat elusus ratione ruentis acervi;[1]

> "I take the grant, and by degrees prevail
> (For hair by hair I pull the horse's tail),
> And while I take them year by year away,
> Their subtle heaps of arguments decay;"

and let them boldly call philosophy to their assistance; in whose teeth it may be cast that, seeing it neither discerns the one nor the other end of the junction betwixt the too much and the too little, the long and the short, the light and the heavy, the near and remote; that seeing it discovers neither the beginning nor the end, it must needs judge very uncertainly of the middle: *Rerum natura nullam nobis dedit cognitionem finium.*[2] "Nature has given us no knowledge of the limits of things." Are they not still wives and friends to the dead, who are not at the end of this, but in the other world? We embrace not only the absent, but those who have been, and those who are not yet. We do not promise in marriage to be continually linked together, like some little animals that we see, or like those of Karenty that are bewitched, tied together like dogs;[3] and a wife ought not to be so greedily enamoured of her husband's fore-parts that she cannot endure to see him turn his back, if occasion be. But may not this saying of that excellent painter of

[1] Horace, *Epist.* ii. i. 38, and 45.
[2] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 29.
[3] It is Saxo Grammaticus that has left us the story of these hag-ridden creatures, in the fourteenth book of his *History of Denmark;* where, speaking of the conversion of the people of Rugen, an island in the Baltic, he says that the inhabitants of Karantia, or Kerantia, one of their towns, after having renounced their worship of idols, were nevertheless still afraid of their power, remembering how often they had been punished for their lewdness, when both sexes were tied together in the action, after the manner of dogs, and even faster. Sometimes, when they were taken in the fact, they were, for the diversion of the people, hoisted upon a perch, the man on one side and the woman on the other, without being able to separate. If this fact was true, one could hardly help inferring that the devil was at that time much more severe or more mischievous than he is now.

woman's humours, be here introduced, to show the reason of their complaints?

> Uxor, si cesses, aut te amare cogitat,
> Aut tete amari, aut potare, aut animo obsequi:
> Et tibi bene esse soli, cum sibi sit male;[1]

> "Thy wife, if thou stay'st long abroad, is mov'd,
> Thinking thou either lov'st, or art belov'd;
> Drinking, or something else, thyself to please,
> And that thou'rt well, whilst she is ill at ease;"

or may it not be, that of itself, opposition and contradiction support and nourish them; and that they sufficiently accommodate themselves, provided they incommode you?

In true friendship, wherein I am skilled, I more give myself to my friend than I attract him to me. I am not only better pleased in doing him service, than if he conferred a benefit upon me; but, moreover, had rather he should do himself good than me, and he most obliges me when he does so. And if absence be either more pleasant or convenient for him, 'tis also more acceptable to me, than his presence; neither is it properly absence, when we can write to one another. I have often made good use of our separation for a time; we better filled and further extended the possession of life in being parted; he[2] lived, rejoiced, and saw for me, and I for him, as plainly as if he had himself been there; one part of us remained idle when we were together; we became confounded; the distance of place rendered the conjunction of our wills more rich. This insatiable desire of personal presence a little implies weakness in the fruition of souls.

Of the utility the absence of a friend is.

As to age, which is alleged against me, 'tis quite contrary; 'tis for youth to subject itself to common opinions, and to curb itself to please others; it has wherewithal to please both the people and itself; we have but too much ado to please ourselves alone. As natural conveniences fail, let us supply them with

Whether old age should prevent one's travelling.

[1] Terence, *Adelph.* i. 1, 7.

[2] *La Boëtie.*

those that are artificial. 'Tis injustice to excuse youth for pursuing its pleasures, and to forbid old men to seek them. When young, I concealed my wanton passions with prudence; now I am old, I chase away melancholy by debauch.[1] And thus do the Platonic laws[2] forbid travel till forty or fifty years old, that men's travels might be more useful and instructive in so mature an age. I should sooner subscribe to the second article of the laws, which forbids it after threescore.

"But at such an age, you will never return from so long a journey." What care I for that? I neither undertake it to return from nor to finish it; my business is only to keep myself in motion whilst motion pleases me, and only journey for the journey's sake. They who hunt after a benefice or a hare run not; they only run that run at base, and to exercise their running. My design is divisible throughout; it is not grounded upon any great hopes; every day is complete in itself; and the journey of my life is carried on after the same manner. And yet I have seen places enough a great way off, where I could have wished to have been staid. And why not, if Chrysippus, Cleanthes, Diogenes, Zeno, Antipater, so many sages of the sourest sect, cheerfully abandoned their country,[3] without occasion of complaint, and only for the enjoyment of another air? In truth, that which most displeases me in all my travels is that I cannot resolve to settle my abode where I should best like, but that I must always propose to myself to return, to accommodate myself to the common humour.

[1] "This word *debauch*," observes M. Coste, "must be taken in a moderate sense, and such as is suitable to Montaigne's genius and character, and to the subject he here treats of; that is to say, to his passion for travel, which he is pleased to term a debauch, by an excursion which is very common to him. There is scarce any writer who has more need than Montaigne of a judicious reader, and one, especially, that is fair and candid. His style, which abounds with bold expressions and figures, is very likely to deceive a cavilling censor, or to give a handle to those ill-natured critics who, without regard to truth, boldly censure the most innocent expressions, when they think they can represent them to other persons in a criminal light."

[2] Plato, *Laws*, xii.

[3] Chrysippus was of Soles, Cleanthes of Assos, Diogenes of Babylon, Zeno of Citium in the isle of Cyprus, Antipater of Tarsus, all Stoic philosophers, who passed their lives at Athens, as Plutarch has observed in his *Treatise of Banishment*.

If I feared to die in any other place than that of my birth; if I thought I should die more uneasily remote from my own family, I should hardly go out of France; I should not without fear step out of my parish; I feel death always twitching me by the throat or by the back. But I am of another temper; 'tis in all places alike to me. Yet, might I have my choice, I think I should rather choose to die on horseback than in a bed, out of my own house, and far from my own people. There is more of heart-breaking than consolation in taking leave of one's friends; I am willing to omit that civility; for that, of all the offices of friendship, is the only one that is unpleasant; and I could with all my heart dispense with that great and eternal farewell. If there be any convenience in so many standers by, it brings a hundred inconveniences along with it. I have seen many miserably dying, surrounded with all this train; 'tis a crowd that chokes them. 'Tis against duty, and a testimony of little kindness and little care, to permit you to die in repose; one torments your eyes, another afflicts your ears, another your tongue; you have no sense or member that is not teased by them. Your heart is wounded with compassion to hear the mourning of your real friends; and, perhaps, with spite, to hear the counterfeit condolings of those who only pretend and make a show of being so. Whoever has been delicate that way when well, is much more so in his illness; in such a necessity a tender hand is required, accommodated to his sentiments, to scratch him just in the place where he itches, or not to meddle with him at all. If we stand in need of a wise woman[1] to bring us into the world, we have need of a wiser man to help us out of it. Such a one, and a friend to boot, a man ought to purchase at any rate for such an occasion. I am not yet arrived at such a pitch of vigour as to be able so to fortify myself in my own strength that nothing can assist or offend me; I have not brought myself to that; I endeavour to evade hidingly, and

Montaigne preferred to die abroad rather than at home; and why.

[1] *Sage-femme*, a midwife.

to escape from this passage, not from fear, but from art. I do not intend, in this act of dying, to muster up and make a show of my constancy. For whom should I do it? All the right and title I have to reputation will then cease. I content myself with a death collected within itself, quiet, solitary, all my own, suitable to my retired and private life; quite contrary to the Roman superstition, where a man was looked upon as unhappy who died without speaking, and that had not his nearest relations to close his eyes. I have enough to do to comfort myself, without having to console others; thoughts enough in my head, not to need that circumstances should possess me with new; and matter enough to occupy myself withal without borrowing. This critical minute is out of the part of society; 'tis the act of one single person. Let us live and be merry amongst our friends; let us go die, and be sullen amongst strangers; a man may find those for his money will shift his pillow and rub his feet, and will trouble him no more than he would have them; who will present him with an indifferent countenance, and suffer him to govern himself; and to complain according to his own method.

I wean myself daily, by reason, from this childish and inhuman humour of desiring by our sufferings to move the compassion and mourning of our friends; we set forth our discomforts beyond their just weight, in order to extract tears from them, and the constancy which we commend in every one in supporting his own adverse fortune, we accuse and reproach in our friends, when the case is our own; we are not satisfied that they should be sensible of our condition only, unless they be moreover afflicted. A man should publish and communicate his joy, but, as much as he can, conceal and smother his grief. He that makes himself pitied without reason, is a man not to be pitied when there shall be real cause; to be always complaining is the way never to get sympathy; by making himself out always so miserable, he is never commiserated by any. He that makes himself dead

when living, is subject to be held as though alive when he is dying. I have seen some take it ill, when they have been told that they looked well, and that their pulse was temperate; contain their smiles, because they betrayed a recovery, and be angry at their health because it did not call forth pity; and, which is a great deal more, they were not women either.

Mourning very improper about sick persons.

I describe my infirmities at most, such as they are, and avoid all expression of ill prognostic and made-up exclamations. If not mirth, at least a temperate countenance in the standers by, is proper in the presence of a wise sick man; he does not quarrel with health, for seeing himself in a contrary condition; he is pleased to contemplate it sound and entire in others, and at least to enjoy it for company; he does not, for feeling himself melt away, abandon all thoughts of life, nor avoid to discourse of ordinary and indifferent things. I would study sickness whilst I am well; when it has seized me, it will make its impression real enough, without the help of my imagination. We prepare ourselves beforehand for the journeys we undertake and resolve upon; we leave the appointment of the hour when to take horse to the company, and in their favour defer it.

I find this unexpected advantage in the publication of my manners, that it in some sort serves me for a rule; I have every now and then consideration of not betraying or falsifying the history of my life; this public declaration obliges me to keep my way, and not to give the lie to the picture I have drawn of my qualities, commonly less deformed and contradictory than the malignity and infirmity of the judgments of this age would have them. The uniformity and simplicity of my manners produce a face of easy interpretation; but because the fashion is a little new, and not in use, it gives too great opportunity to slander. Yet so it is, that whoever will go about justly to condemn me, I do think I so sufficiently assist his malice in my known and avowed imperfections, that he may that way satisfy his ill-nature, without fighting with

the wind. If I myself, to prevent this accusation and discovery, confess enough to frustrate his malice, as he conceives, 'tis but reason that he make use of his right of amplification and extension; offence has a right beyond justice; and let him make the roots of those errors I have laid open to him, shoot up into trees and branches; let him make his use not only of those I am really infected with, but also of those that only threaten me, injurious vices both in quality and number; let him cudgel me that way. I should willingly follow the example of the philosopher Bion:—Antigonus sought to annoy him by reproaching him with the meanness of his birth; he presently cut him short with this declaration: "I am," said he, "the son of a slave, a butcher, and stigmatized, and of a whore, my father married in the lowest of his fortune; both of them were whipped for offences they had committed. An orator bought me when a child, finding me a pretty and hopeful boy, and when he died left me all his estate, which I have transported into this city of Athens, and here settled myself to the study of philosophy. Let the historians never trouble themselves with inquiry after me; I tell them what I am."[1] A free and generous confession enervates reproach, and disarms slander. So it is that, one thing with another, I fancy men as often commend as undervalue me beyond reason; as methinks, also, from my infancy, in rank and degree of honour, they have given me a place rather above than below my right. I should find myself more at ease in a country where these degrees were either regulated or not regarded. Amongst men, when the difference about the precedency either of walking or sitting, exceeds three replies, 'tis uncivil. I never stick at giving or taking place out of rule, to avoid the trouble of ceremony, and never any man had a mind to go before me, but I permitted him to do it.

Besides the profit I make of writing of myself, I have also hoped for this other advantage, that if it should fall out

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, iv. 46.

that my humour should please or jump with those of some honest man, before I die, he would desire and seek to be acquainted with me, and come to me. I have given him a great deal of space; for all that he could have in many years acquired by a long familiarity, he has seen in three days in this register, and more surely and exactly set down. A pleasant fancy! many things that I would not confess to any one in particular, I deliver to the public; and send my best friends to a bookseller's shop, there to inform themselves concerning my most secret thoughts:—

Excutienda damus præcordia.[1]

"My entrails I lay open to men's view."

Could I, by good tokens, know where to seek any one proper for my conversation, I would certainly go a great way to find him out; for the sweetness of suitable and agreeable company cannot, in my opinion, be bought too dear. Oh! what a thing is a friend! How true is that old saying, "That the use of a friend is more pleasing and necessary than the elements of water and fire!"[2]

How useful and necessary a friend is.

To return to my subject, there is, then, no great harm in dying apart, and far from home; we conceive ourselves obliged to retire for natural actions less unseemly and less terrible than this. But moreover, such as are reduced to spin out a long and languishing life, ought not perhaps to wish to trouble a large family with their continual miseries. Therefore the Indians, in a certain province, thought it just to knock a man on the head, when reduced to such a necessity; and in another of their provinces they all forsook him, to shift for himself as well as he could. To whom do they not at last become tedious and insupportable? The common offices do not go so far. You teach your best friends to be cruel perforce; hardening both wife and children, by long custom, not to pity or even feel your sufferings. The groans

[1] Persius, v. 22. [2] Cicero, *de Amicit.* c. 5.

forced from me by the stone are grown so familiar to my people, that nobody takes any more notice of them. And though we should extract some pleasure from their conversation, which does not always happen, by reason of the disparity of conditions, which easily begets contempt, or envy toward any one whatever, is it not too much to be troublesome all the days of a man's life? The more I should see them constrain themselves out of affection for me, the more I should be sorry for their pains. We have liberty to lean, but not to lay our whole weight upon others, so as to prop ourselves by their ruin, like him who caused little children's throats to be cut, to make use of their blood for the cure of a certain disease he had; or that other, who was continually supplied with tender young girls, to keep his old limbs warm in the night, and to mix the sweetness of theirs with his sour and stinking breath. Decrepitude is a solitary quality. I am sociable even to excess; and I think it reasonable that I should now withdraw my troubles from the sight of the world, and keep them to myself; let me shrink and draw up myself in some shell like a tortoise; let me learn to see men without hanging upon them. I should endanger them in so steep a passage; 'tis now time to turn my back to company.

Montaigne's preparations with a view to death.

"But in so long a journey you may be surprised with sickness in some wretched place, where nothing can be had to relieve you." I always carry most things necessary about me; and besides, we cannot evade this fortune, if she once resolve to attack us. I need nothing extraordinary when I am sick; I will not be beholden to a bolus to do that for me which nature cannot. At the very beginning of my fevers and the sicknesses that cast me down, whilst entire and but little disordered in health, I reconcile myself to Almighty God by the last Christian offices, and find myself by so doing less oppressed and more easy, and have got, methinks, so much the better of my disease. I have still less need of a scrivener, or counsellor, than of a physician. What I have not settled of my affairs

when I was in health, let no one expect I should do it when I am sick. What I will do for the service of death, is always ready done; I durst not so much as one day defer it;[1] and if nothing be done, 'tis as much as to say, either that doubt hindered my choice (and sometimes 'tis well chosen not to choose), or that I was positively resolved not to do anything at all.

I write my book for few men, and for few years. Had it been matter of duration, I should have put it into a better language. According to the continual variation that ours has been subject to hitherto, who can expect that the present form should be in use fifty years hence? It slips every day through our fingers, and since I was born is altered above one half. We say that it is now perfect; every age says the same of the language it speaks; I shall hardly trust to that, so long as it runs away and changes as it does.

'Tis for good and useful writings to nail and rivet it to them, and its reputation will go according to the fortune of our state. For which reason I am not afraid to insert herein several private articles, which will spend their use amongst the men that are now living, and that concern the particular knowledge of some, who will see further into them than the common reader. I will not, after all, as I often hear dead men spoken of, that men should say of me: "He judged and lived so and so; he would have done this or that. Could he have spoken when he was dying, he would have said so or so, and have given this thing or the other. I knew him better than any." Now, as much as decency permits, I here discover my inclinations and affections; but I do it more willingly and freely by word of mouth, to any one who desires to be informed. So it is, that in these memoirs, if any ob-

[1] What Montaigne here says is fully confirmed by an anecdote related by Bernard Anthone, in his *Commentaire sur la Coutume de Bordeaux:* "The late Montaigne," he says, "author of the Essays, feeling the approach of death, got out of bed in his shirt, and putting on his dressing gown, opened the door of his chamber, and calling all his servants, and others to whom he had left legacies, together, paid them the sums he had respectively bequeathed them in his will, foreseeing the difficulty they might have in obtaining the amount from his heirs."

serve, he will find that I have either told or designed to tell all. What I cannot express, I point out with my finger;—

> Verum animo satis hæc vestigia parva sagaci
> Sunt, per quæ possis cognoscere cætera tute.[1]
>
> "But by these footsteps a sagacious mind
> May easily all other matters find."

I leave nothing to be desired or guessed at concerning me. If people must be talking of me, I would have it to be justly and truly. I would come again with all my heart from the other world, to give any one the lie that should report me other than I was, though he did it to honour me. I perceive that people represent even living men quite another thing than what they really are; and had I not stoutly defended a friend whom I have lost,[2] they would have torn him into a thousand different pieces.

What kind of death he relished best.

To conclude the account of my frail humours, I confess that, in my travels, I seldom get to my inn but that it comes into my mind to consider whether I could there be sick and die at my ease. I would be lodged in some convenient part of the house, remote from all noise, ill scents, and smoke. I endeavour to flatter death by these frivolous circumstances, or rather to discharge myself from all other encumbrances, that I may have nothing to do but to wait it; it will lie heavy enough upon me, without any other load. I would have my death share in the ease and comfort of my life; 'tis a great part of it, and of the greatest importance, and I hope it will not contradict what went before it. Death hath some forms that are more easy than others, and receives diverse qualities, according to every one's fancy. Amongst the natural ones, those that proceed from weakness and insensibility I think the most favourable; amongst those that are violent, I can worse endure to think of a precipice than the fall of a house, that will crush me flat in a moment; and a wound with a sword than a harquebuss

[1] Lucret i. 403.

[2] *La Boëtie.* See book i. chap. 27, *On Friendship.*

shot; and should rather have chosen to poison myself with Socrates than stab myself with Cato; and, though it be the same thing, yet my imagination makes as great a difference as betwixt death and life, betwixt throwing myself into a burning furnace, and plunging into the channel of a river. So idly does our fear more concern itself in the means than the effect; it is but an instant, 'tis true, but 'tis withal an instant of such weight, that I would willingly give a great many days of my life to pass it over after my own fashion. Since every one's imagination renders it more or less terrible, and since every one has some choice amongst the several forms of dying, let us try a little further to find some one that is wholly clear from all offence. Might not one render it moreover voluptuous, as the Commorientes of Antony and Cleopatra?[1] I leave aside the brave and exemplary efforts produced by philosophy and religion; but amongst men of little note, such as a Petronius and a Tigillinus at Rome,[2] condemned to dispatch themselves, who have, as it were, rocked death asleep with the delicacy of their preparations; they have made it slip and steal away in the height of their accustomed diversions, amongst wenches and good fellows; not a word of consolation, no mention of making a will, no ambitious affectation of firmness, no talk of their future condition; amidst sports, feasts, wit, and mirth, common and indifferent discourses, music, and amorous verses. Were it not possible for us to imitate this resolution after a more decent manner? Since there are deaths that are fit for fools and fit for the wise, let us find out such as are fit for those who are betwixt both. My imagination suggests to me one that is easy, and, since we must die, to be desired. The Roman tyrants thought they did in a manner give a criminal life, when they gave him a choice of his death. But was not Theophras-

The manner of dying left to the choice of criminals by the tyrants.

[1] *Commorientes* was the title of a comedy that Plautus imitated from the Συναποθνησκοντες of Diphilus. (Terence, *Adelph. prol.* verse 7.) Montaigne alludes to the brotherhood of the Synapotanoumenes, a band of those that would die together, formed by Antony and Cleopatra, after the battle of Actium. See Plutarch, *Life of Antony*, c. 15.

[2] Tacitus, *Annal.* xvi. 19.

tus, that so delicate, so modest, and so wise philosopher, compelled by reason, when he durst repeat this verse, thus translated by Cicero:—

Vitam regit fortuna, non sapientia.[1]

"Fortune, not wisdom, human life doth sway."

Fortune is assisting to the facility of the bargain of my life, having placed it in such a condition that for the future it can be neither advantage nor hindrance to those that are concerned in me. 'Tis a condition that I would have accepted at any time of my age; but in this occasion of trussing up my baggage, I am particularly pleased, that in dying I shall neither do them pleasure nor displeasure; she has so ordered it, by a cunning compensation, that they who may pretend to any considerable advantage by my death, will at the same time sustain a material loss. Death sometimes is more grievous to us, in that it is grievous to others, and interests us in their interest as much as in our own, and sometimes more.

In this conveniency of lodging that I desire, I mix nothing of pomp and splendour, I hate it rather; but a certain plain neatness, which is often found in places where there is less of art, and that nature has adorned with some grace that is all her own: *Non ampliter, sed munditer convivium;*[2] *plus salis, quam sumptus.*[3] "A repast where neatness reigns, not abundance; pleasure, not expense." And, besides, 'tis for those whose affairs compel them to travel in the depth of winter through the Grisons, to be surprised upon the way with great inconveniences. I, who for the most part travel for my pleasure, do not order my affairs so ill. If the way be bad on my right hand, I turn on my left; if I find myself unfit to ride, I stay where I am; and proceeding thus, in truth, I see nothing that is not as pleasant and commodious as my own house. 'Tis true that I always find superfluities superfluous, and observe a kind of trouble even

His method of travelling.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 9.
[2] Cornelius Nepos, *Atticus*, c. 13.
[3] Nonius, xi. 19

in abundance itself. Have I left anything behind me unseen, I go back to see it; 'tis still my way; I trace no certain line, either straight or crooked.[1] Do I not find in the place to which I go what was reported to me (as it oft falls out that the judgments of others do not jump with mine, and that I have found those reports for the most part false)? I never complain of losing my labour; I have informed myself that what was told me was not true.

I have a constitution of body as free, and a palate as indifferent, as any man living; the diversities of fashions of divers nations no further concern me than by the pleasure of variety; every custom has its reason. Let the plate and dishes be pewter, wood, or earth, my meat be boiled or roasted, let them give me butter or oil, nuts or olives, hot or cold, 'tis all one to me; indeed, so much so, that, growing old, I accuse this generous faculty, and have need that delicacy and choice should correct the indiscretion of my appetite, and sometimes relieve my stomach. When I have been abroad out of France, and the people out of civility have asked me if I would be served after the French manner, I laughed at the question, and always frequented tables the most filled with foreigners. I am ashamed to see my countrymen besotted with this foolish humour of quarrelling with forms contrary to their own; they seem to be out of their element when out of their own village; wherever they go they keep strictly to their own fashions, and abominate those of strangers. Do they meet with a countryman in Hungary? Oh, the happy adventure! They are thenceforward inseparable; they cling together, and their whole discourse is to condemn the barbarous manners they see there; and why not barbarous, since they are not French? And those have made the best use of their travels who have observed most to speak against; for

[1] "Nous ne voyagéons point tristement assis et comme emprisonnés dans une petite cage bien fermée . . On observe le pays; on se détourne à droite, à gauche; on examine tout ce qui flatte; on s'arrête à tous les points de vues. Aperçois-je une rivière? Je la cotoie; un bois touffu? Je vais sous son ombre . . . Je n'ai pas besoin de choisir les chemins tout faits, les routes commodes; je passe partout où un homme peut passer." Rousseau, *Emile*, liv. v.

most of them go for no other end but to return; they proceed in their travel with great gravity and circumspection, with a silent and incommunicable prudence, preserving themselves from the contagion of an unknown air. What I am saying of them puts me in mind of something like it; I have observed in some of our young courtiers, they will not mix with any but men of their own sort, and look upon us as men of another world, with disdain or pity. Put them upon any discourse but the intrigues of the Court, and they are utterly at a loss, as very owls and novices to us as we are to them. 'Tis truly said, that a well-bred man is of a compound education. I, for my part, travel very much sated with our own fashions; not to look for Gascons in Sicily, I have left them at home; I rather seek for Greeks and Persians; they are the men I endeavour to be acquainted with, and the men I study; 'tis there that I bestow and employ myself; and, which is more, I fancy that I have met with but few customs that are not as good as our own; I have not, I confess, travelled very far; scarce out of the sight of the vanes of my own house.

As to the rest, most of the accidental company a man falls into upon the road give him more trouble than pleasure; I waive them as much as I civilly can, especially now that age seems in some sort to privilege and sequester me from the common forms. You suffer for others, or others suffer for you; both of which inconveniences are troublesome, but the latter appears to me the most so. 'Tis a rare fortune, but of inestimable pleasure, to have a worthy man, one of a sound judgment, and of manners conformable to your own, who takes a delight to bear you company. I have been at an infinite loss for that upon my travels; but such a companion should be chosen and acquired from your first setting out. There is no pleasure to me without communication; there is not so much as a sprightly thought comes into my mind, that it does not grieve me to have produced alone, and that I have no one to tell it too: *Si cum hac exceptione detur sapientia, ut illam inclusam*

Worthy men of great pleasure in travel.

teneam, nec enunciem rejiciam.[1] "If wisdom were conferred with this proviso, that I must keep it to myself, and not communicate it to others, I would have none of it." This other has strained it one note higher: *Si contigerit ea vita sapienti, ut in omnium rerum affluentibus copiis, quamvis omnia, quæ cognitione digna sunt, summo otio secum ipse consideret, et contempletur; tamen, si solitudo tanta sit ut hominem videre non possit, excedat e vitâ.*[2] "If such a condition of life should happen to a wise man, that in the greatest plenty of all conveniences he might at the most undisturbed leisure consider and contemplate all the things worth the knowing, yet if his solitude must be such that he must not see a man, he had much better die." Architas was of my opinion when he said, "That it would be unpleasant, even in heaven itself, to wander in those great and divine celestial bodies without a companion."[3] But yet it is much better to be alone than in foolish and troublesome company. Aristippus loved to live as a stranger in all places:—

> Me si fata meis paterentur ducere vitam
> Auspiciis,[4]
>
> "But if the fates would so propitious be,
> To let me live at my own liberty,"

I should choose to pass away the greatest part of my life on horseback,

> Visere gestiens,
> Quâ parte debacchentur ignes,
> Quâ nebulæ, pluviique rores.[5]
>
> "Where endless summers parch the plain,
> Or where the clouds o'erflow with endless rain."

"Have you not more easy diversions at home? What do you there want? Is not your house situated in a sweet and healthful air, sufficiently furnished, and more than sufficiently large? The royal majesty has more than once been entertained there with all his train. Has not your family left

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 6.
[2] Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 43.
[3] Id. *de Amicitiâ*, c. 23.
[4] *Æneid*, iv. 340.
[5] Horace, *Od.* iii. 3, 54.

more below it in good government than it has above it in eminence? Is there any novel, extraordinary, and indigestible thought that afflicts you:—

> Quæ te nunc coquat et vexet sub pectore fixa?[1]
> 'That now lies broiling in thy troubled breast,
> And ne'er will suffer thee to be at rest?'

"Where do you think to live without disturbance? *Nunquam simpliciter fortuna indulget.*[2] 'The favours of fortune are never without a mixture of evil.' You see then it is only you that trouble yourself, and everywhere complain; for there is no satisfaction here below, but either for brutish or divine souls. He who, with so just reasons, has no contentment, where will he think to find it? How many millions of men terminate their wishes in such a condition as yours? Do but reform yourself, for that is wholly in your own power; whereas you have no other right but patience towards fortune: *Nulla placida quies est, nisi quam ratio composuit.*[3] 'True tranquillity is that alone which reason prepares for us.'"

I see the correctness of this advice, and I see it perfectly well; but my adviser might sooner have done, and have spoken more pertinently, in bidding me, in two words, "Be wise." This resolution is after wisdom; 'tis her work and product; thus the physician goes preaching to a poor languishing patient, "Be cheerful;" but he would advise him a little more discreetly in bidding him, "Be well." For my part, I am but a man of the common sort. 'Tis a wholesome precept, certain, and easy to be understood: "Be content with what you have," that is to say, with reason; and yet to follow this advice is no more in the power of the wise men of the world than in me. 'Tis a common saying, but of a terrible extent; what does it not comprehend? All things come under discretion and qualification. I know very well that, to take it to the letter, this pleasure in travelling is a testimony of uneasiness and irresolution; but these two are

[1] Ennius, *apud* Cicero, *de Senect.* c. 1.
[2] Quint. Curtius, iv. 14.
[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 56.

our governing and predominating qualities. Yes, I confess it, I see nothing, not so much as in a dream and in a wish, whereon I could set up my rest; variety only, and the possession of diversity, can satisfy me, if anything can. In travelling, it pleases me that I may stay where I like, without inconvenience, and that I have wherewithal commodiously to divert myself. I love a private life, because 'tis my own choice that I love it, not by any particular distaste or unfitness for public life, which, perhaps, is as much according to my complexion; I serve my prince more cheerfully, because it is by the free election of my own judgment and reason, without any particular obligation; and that I am not compelled so to do, for being rejected or disliked by the other party; and so of all the rest. I hate the morsels that necessity carves me; I should think that the greatest convenience upon which I only had to depend, had me by the throat:—

> Alter remus aquas, alter mihi radat arenas.[1]
>
> "Let me in water plunge one oar,
> And with the other rake the shore."

One cord will never hold me fast enough. You will say there is vanity in this way of living. But where is there not? Both these fine precepts are vanity, and all wisdom is vanity: *Dominus novit cogitationes sapientium, quoniam vanæ sunt:*[2] "The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." These exquisite subtleties are only fit for sermons; they are discourses that will send us all cut and dry into the other world. Life is a material and corporal motion; an action imperfect and irregular of its own proper essence; I make it my business to serve it according to itself.

> Quisque suos patimur manes.[3]
>
> "We are all punished for our proper crimes."

Sic est faciendum, ut contra naturam universam nihil contendamus; eâ tamen conservatâ, propriam sequamur.[4] "We

[1] Prop. iii. 3, 23.
[2] Corinthians, i. 3, 20. Psalm, 93, v. 11.
[3] *Æneid*, vi. 743.
[4] Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 31

must so order it as by no means to contend against universal nature; but yet, that rule being observed, to follow our own." To what end are these elevated points of philosophy, upon which no human being can rely? And those rules that exceed our use and our strength?

Philosophical precepts as much despised by the authors of them as by the person to whom they are addressed.

I often observe that we have rules of life set before us, which neither the proposer nor those that hear him have any manner of hope, nor, which is more, any inclination, to follow. Of the same sheet of paper whereon the judge has but just written a sentence against an adulterer, he steals a piece whereon to write a love-letter to his companion's wife. She whom you have but just now entertained in your embraces will presently, even in your own hearing, more loudly inveigh against the same fault in her companion than would Porcia.[1] And such there are who will condemn men to death for crimes that they do not themselves repute so much as faults. I have in my youth seen a gentleman with one hand present the people with verses that excelled both in wit and debauchery, and with the other, at the same time, the most straight-laced and quarrelsome theological reformation that the world has been treated with these many years.[2] Men proceed in this way; they let the laws and precepts follow their road, but themselves keep another course, not only from debauchery of manners, but ofttimes by judgment and contrary opinion. Do but hear a philosophical lecture; the invention, eloquence, and pertinency immediately strike upon your mind, and move you; there is nothing that either flatters or reprehends your conscience; 'tis not that they address. Is not this true? This made Aristo say, "that neither a bath nor a lecture were of use, unless they scoured and made men clean."[3] One may stop at the outward skin, but 'tis after the marrow is picked out; as after having quaffed off the wine

[1] Daughter of Cato of Utica, and wife of Brutus.

[2] Montaigne probably refers to Theodore de Beza, who at one and the same time, in 1550, published his amorous poems, *Juvenilia*, and his intolerant apology for the trial and execution of Servetus.

[3] Plutarch, *How to hear*, &c. c. 3.

out of a fine cup, we consider the graving and workmanship. In all the courts of ancient philosophy this is to be found, that the same lecturer there publishes the rules of temperance, and at the same time discourses of love and wantonness; and Xenophon, even in the bosom of Clinias, wrote against the Aristippic virtue.[1] 'Tis not that there is any miraculous conversion in it that makes them thus wavering, but 'tis as Solon represents himself, sometimes in his own person, and sometimes in that of a legislator; one while he speaks for the crowd, and another for himself; taking the free and natural rules for his own share, assuring himself of a firm and established health and vigour:—

> Curentur dubii medicis majoribus ægri.[2]
>
> "A desperate case needs ablest hands."

A sage permitted to love.

Antisthenes[3] allowed a sage to love, and to do whatever he saw opportune, without regard to the laws; forasmuch as he was better advised than they, and had a greater knowledge of virtue. His disciple, Diogenes, said;[4] that men to perturbations were to oppose reason, to fortune, courage, and to the laws, nature. For tender stomachs, constrained and artificial recipes must be prescribed; good and strong stomachs serve themselves simply with the prescriptions of their own natural appetite; after this manner do our physicians proceed, who eat melons, and drink iced wines, whilst they confine their patients to sirups and sops. "I know not," said the courtesan Laïs, "what they talk of books, wisdom, and philosophy; but these men knock as often at my door as any others."[5] At the same rate that our license always carries us beyond what is lawful and allowed, men have, often beyond universal reason, narrowed the precepts and rules of life:—

> Nemo satis credit tantum delinquere, quantum
> Permittas.[6]

[1] Laertius, *Life of Xenophon.*
[2] Juvenal, xiii. 121.
[3] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, vi. 11.
[4] Id. *ib.* 38.
[5] Ant. Guevara, *Golden Epistles*, book i.
[6] Juvenal, xiv. 233.

"None sin by rule; none heed the charge precise;
'Thus, and no farther, may ye step in vice,'
But leap the bounds prescrib'd, and with free grace
Scour far and wide the interdicted space."

It were to be wished that there were more proportion betwixt the command and the obedience; and the mark seems to be unjust to which one cannot attain. There is no man so good, who, were he to submit all his thoughts and actions to the laws, would not deserve hanging ten times in his life; nay, and such a one, too, as it were great pity to make away with, and very unjust to punish:—

Ole, quid ad te,
De cute quid faciat ille, vel illa sua? [1]

"Olus, what is't to thee
What with themselves does he or she?"

and such a one there may be as hath no way offended the laws, who nevertheless would not deserve the character of a virtuous man, and that philosophy would justly condemn to be whipped; so unequal and perplexed is this relation! We are so far from being good men, according to the laws of God, that we cannot be so according to our own; human wisdom never yet arrived at the duty that it had itself prescribed; and could it arrive there, it would still prescribe itself others beyond it, to which it would ever aspire and pretend; so great an enemy to consistency is our human condition. 'Tis man enjoins himself to be necessarily in fault; he is not very discreet to cut out his duty by the measure of any other being than his own; to whom does he prescribe that which he does not expect any one should perform? Is he unjust in not doing what it is impossible for him to do? The laws which condemn us not to be able, condemn us for not being able.

At the worst, this disform liberty of presenting themselves two several ways, the doing after one manner, and the saying after another, may be allowed to those who only speak of

[1] Martial, vii. 9, 1.

things; but it cannot be allowed to them who speak themselves, as I do; I must march my pen as I do my feet. The common life ought to have communication with other lives; the virtue of Cato was vigorous beyond the reason of the age he lived in; and for a man whose province it was to take part in the governing others, dedicated to the public service, it might be called a justice, if not unjust, at least vain and out of season.[1] Even my own manners, which have not above an inch of singularity in them above those that are current amongst us, render me nevertheless a little odd and unsociable to the age I live in. I know not whether it be that I am disgusted without reason with the world I frequent; but I know very well that it would be without reason, should I complain of its being disgusted with me, seeing I am so with it. The virtue that is assigned to the affairs of the world is a virtue of many wavings, corners, and elbows, to join and adapt itself to human frailty; mixed and artificial, not straight, clean, constant, nor purely innocent. Our annals to this very day reproach one of our kings for suffering himself implicitly to be carried away by the conscientious persuasions of his confessor; affairs of state hold bolder precepts;—

> Exeat aulâ
> Qui vult esse pius.[2]
>
> "Let him who will be good from court retire."

I have formerly tried to employ, in the management of public affairs, opinions and rules of living, as rude, new, unpolished, or unpolluted, as were either born with me, or brought away from my education, and wherewith I serve my turn, if not so commodiously, at least as securely, in my own particular concerns; but I have found this scholastic and novice virtue foolish and dangerous in those matters. He that goes into a crowd, must now go one way, and then another, keep his elbows close, retire, or advance, and quit the direct way,

[1] Cicero, too, says of him (*Epist. ad Atticum*, ii. 1): "Dicit enim tanquam, in Platonis πολιτεια, non tanquam in Romuli fæce, sententiam."

[2] Lucan, viii. 493.

according to what he encounters; and must live, not so much according to his own method as that of others; not according to what he purposes to himself, but according to what is proposed to him, according to the time, according to men, according to occasions. Plato says that whoever escapes the world's handling with clean breeches escapes by miracle; and says, too, that when he appoints his philosopher the head of a government, he does not mean a corrupt one like that of Athens,[1] and much less such a one as this of ours, wherein wisdom itself would be to seek; a good herb, transplanted into a soil very contrary to its own nature, much sooner conforms itself to the soil, than it reforms the soil to it. I feel, if I were wholly to apply myself to such employments, it would require a great deal of change and new modelling in me, before I could be any way fit for it. And though I could so far prevail upon myself (and why might I not with time and diligence), I would not do it. What little I have had to do with public employments has been so much disgust to me; I feel betimes some temptations toward ambition rising in my soul, but I obstinately oppose them:—

At tu, Catulle, obstinatus obdura.[2]

"But thou, Catullus, hold out to the last."

I am seldom called to it, and as seldom offer myself uncalled; liberty and laziness, the qualities most predominant in me, are qualities diametrically contrary to that trade. We cannot distinguish the faculties of men; they have divisions and limits hard and delicate to choose; to conclude, from the discreet conduct of a private life, a capacity for public affairs, is to conclude ill; a man may govern himself well, that cannot govern others so, and compose Essays that cannot work effects; such a one may be who can order a siege well, that would ill marshal a battle, and that can speak well in private, who would ill harangue a people or a prince; nay, 'tis peradventure rather a testimony in him who can

[1] *Republic*, vi. [2] Catullus, *Carm.* viii. 19.

do the one, that he cannot do the other, than otherwise. I find that elevated souls are not much more proper for low things, than mean souls are to high ones. Could it be imagined that Socrates[1] should have given occasion of laughter, at the expense of his own reputation, to the Athenians, for having never been able to sum up the votes of his tribe, to deliver it to the council? Doubtless, the veneration I have for the perfections of this great man, deserves that fortune should furnish for the excuse of my principal imperfections, so magnificent an example. Our sufficiency is cut out into small parcels; mine has no latitude, and is also very contemptible in number. Saturninus,[2] to those who had conferred upon him the command in chief: "Comrades," said he, "you have lost a good captain, to make him an ill general."

Virtue which is genuine and sincere cannot be employed in the management of a corrupt state.

Whoever boasts, in so sick a time as this, to employ a true and sincere virtue in the world's service, either knows it not, opinions growing corrupt with manners (and in truth to hear them describe it, to glorify themselves in their deportments, and to lay down their rules; instead of painting virtue, they paint pure vice and injustice, and so represent them false in the education of princes); or, if he does know it, boasts unjustly, and, let him say what he will, does a thousand things of which his own conscience must necessarily accuse him. I should willingly take Seneca's word of the experience he made upon the like occasion, provided he would deal clearly and sincerely with me. The most honourable mark of goodness, in such a necessity, is freely to confess both his own fault and those of others; with the power of his virtue to stop the inclination towards evil; unwillingly to follow this propensity to hope better, and to desire better. I perceive that in these unhappy divisions wherein we are miserably involved in France, every one does his best to defend, and by argument to make good his cause; but even the very best with

[1] In the *Gorgias* of Plato.

[2] One of the thirty tyrants, who rose in the time of the Emperor Gallienus. See Trebellius Pollio, *Trigint. Tyrann.* c. 23.

dissimulation and disguise; he that would write roundly of the true state of the quarrel, would write boldly and viciously. What is the most party, other than a member of a decayed and worm-eaten body? But of such a body, the member that is least affected is said to be sound, and with good reason, forasmuch as our qualities have no title but in comparison; civil innocence is measured according to time and place. I should love to read in Xenophon this commendation of Agesilaus;[1] being entreated by a neighbouring prince, with whom he had formerly had war, to permit him to pass through his country; he granted his request, giving him free passage through Peloponnesus, and not only did not imprison or poison him, being at his mercy, but courteously received him, according to the obligation of his promise, without doing him the least injury or offence. To such humours as theirs, this was an act of no great lustre; elsewhere, and in another age, the frankness and magnanimity of such an action will be in high esteem. Our childish Capettes would have laughed at it, so little does the Spartan innocence resemble that of France.[2] We are not without virtuous men; but 'tis according to our standard. Whoever has his manners established in regularity above the standard of the age he lives in, let him either wrest or blunt his rules; or, which I would rather advise him to, let him retire, and not meddle with us at all: What will he get by it?

The students of Montaigu College, in Paris.

[1] *Greek History*, iv. 1; where, however, Xenophon speaks not of a passage through Peloponnesus, but of an interview in the camp of Agesilaus.

[2] *Capette* properly means a scholar of Montaigu College at Paris. In 1480 John Sandoncht, of Malines, a doctor of the Sorbonne, settled a fund for maintaining in this college 84 scholars, in honour of the 12 apostles, and the 72 disciples of Jesus Christ. These scholars were called *Capettes* from short cloaks they wore, called *capes*. And as they were treated very harshly, both with regard to their table and to their discipline, they were commonly such low geniuses that the word *capette* was made use of to signify a scholar of the most contemptible character, a fool, an impertinent. "Montaigne, by the use of the term," observes M. Coste, "intends the bulk of his contemporaries, who would not have failed to ridicule the frank and generous spirit of Agesilaus. In the same predicament may be placed those Flemish historians who, having accused Charles V. of imprudence in relying on the good faith of Francis I. when his imperial majesty passed through France in 1540, have thereby signified their opinion that Francis was very weak in slipping so fair an opportunity of making himself master of his most formidable enemy."

Egregium sanctumque virum si cerno, bimembri
Hoc monstrum puero, et miranti jam sub aratro
Piscibus inventis, et fœtæ comparo mulæ.[1]

"If such a man I see, of pious worth,
I straight compare him to a monstrous birth;
To pregnant mules, or fish unheard-of, found
Ploughed by the wond'ring share from out the ground."

A man may regret the better times, but cannot fly from the present; we may wish for other magistrates, but we must, notwithstanding, obey those we have; and peradventure 'tis more laudable to obey the bad than the good. So long as the image of the ancient and received laws of this monarchy shall shine in any corner of the kingdom, there will I be: If they unfortunately happen to thwart and contradict one another, so as to produce two factions of doubtful and difficult choice, I will willingly choose to withdraw from the tempest; in the mean time nature, or the hazards of war, may lend me a helping hand. Betwixt Cæsar and Pompey, I should soon and frankly have declared myself; but amongst the three robbers that came after,[2] a man must needs have either hid himself, or have gone along with the current of the time; which I think a man may lawfully do, when reason no longer rules.

Quo diversus abis?[3]

"Whither dost thou wandering go?"

The reason why Montaigne sometimes deviated from his subject as he does here.

This medley is a little from my subject; I go out of my way; but 'tis rather by license than oversight; my fancies follow one another, but sometimes at a great distance; and look towards one another, but 'tis with an oblique glance. I have read a dialogue of Plato,[4] of such a motley and fantastic composition; the beginning about love, and all the rest about rhetoric; they stick not at these variations, and have a marvellous grace in letting themselves be car-

[1] Juvenal, xiii. 64.
[2] *Octavius*, *Marc-Antony*, and *Lepidus*.
[3] *Æneid*, v. 166.
[4] The *Phædra*.

ried away at the pleasure of the winds; or at least to seem as if they were.

The titles of my chapters do not always comprehend the whole matter; they often denote it by some mark only, as these other titles, Andria, Eunuchus;[1] or these, Sylla, Cicero, Torquatus. I love a poetic march, by leaps and skips; 'tis an art, as Plato says, light, nimble, and a little demoniacal.[2] There are pieces in Plutarch where he forgets his theme; where the proposition of his argument is only found incidentally, and stuffed throughout with foreign matter; do but observe his meanders in the *Demon of Socrates*. Good God! how beautiful are his variations and digressions; and then, most of all, when they seem to be fortuitous, and introduced for want of heed. 'Tis the indiligent reader that loses my subject, not I; there will always be found some words or other in a corner that are to the purpose, though it lie very close. I ramble about, indiscreetly and tumultuously; my style and my wit wander at the same rate. A little folly is desirable in him that will not be guilty of stupidity, say the precepts, and much more the examples, of our masters. A thousand poets flag and languish after a prosaic manner; but the best old prose, and I strew it here up and down indifferently for verse, shines throughout with the vigour and boldness of poetry, and represents some air of its fury. Certainly prose must yield the preëminence in speaking. The poet, says Plato,[3] when set upon the muses' tripod, pours out with fury whatever comes into his mouth, like the pipe of a fountain, without considering and pausing upon what he says; and things come from him of various colours, of contrary substance, and with an irregular torrent; himself is all over poetical; and all the old theology, as the learned inform us, is poetry, and the first philosophy is the original language of the gods. I would have the matter distinguish itself; it sufficiently shows where it changes, where it concludes, where it

1 The names of two of Terence's comedies.

2 Or rather divine, δαιμονικη. Montaigne quotes the *Ion*.

3 *Laws*, vi.

begins, and where it resumes, without interlacing it with words of connection, introduced for the relief of weak or negligent ears, and without commenting myself. Who is he that had not rather not be read at all, than after a drowsy or cursory manner? *Nihil est tam utile quod in transitu prosit.*[1] "Nothing can be so profitable as to be so when negligently read." If to take a book in hand were to read it, if to look upon it were to consider it, and to run it slightly over were to make it a man's own, I were then to blame to make myself out so ignorant as I say I am. Seeing I cannot fix the attention of my reader by the weight of what I write, *manco male*, if I should chance to do it by my intricacies. "Nay, but he will afterwards repent that he ever occupied himself about it." True, but he will still have occupied himself. And besides, there are some humours in which intelligence produces disdain, who will think better of me for not understanding what I say; they will conclude the depth of my meaning by the obscurity; which, to speak sincerely, I mortally hate, and would avoid it if I could. Aristotle boasts somewhere[2] that he affected it; vicious affectation! The short chapters that I made my method in the beginning of my book, having since seemed to me to break and dissolve the attention before it was raised, as making it disdain to settle itself to so little, I upon that account have made the rest longer, such as require proposition and assigned leisure. In such an employment, to whom you will not give an hour you will give nothing; and you do nothing for him for whom you only do whilst you are doing something else. To which may be added, that I have perhaps some particular obligation to speak only by halves, to speak confusedly and discordantly. I am therefore angry at this kind of perplexing reason, and these extravagant projects that trouble a man's life, and those opinions so fine and subtle; though they be true, I think them too dear bought. On the contrary, I make

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 2.

[2] See Aulus Gellius, xx. 5; Plutarch, *Life of Alexander.*

it my business to bring vanity itself in repute, and folly too, if it bring me any pleasure; and let myself follow my own natural inclinations, without carrying too strict a hand upon them.

I have seen elsewhere palaces in ruins, and statues, both of gods and men, defaced, and yet there are men still. All this is true; and yet for all that I cannot so often review the ruins of that so great, and since so holy, city,[1] that I do not admire and reverence it. The care of the dead is recommended to us; besides, I have been bred up from my infancy with these people; I had knowledge of the affairs of Rome long before I had any of those of my own house. I knew the Capitol and its plan before I knew the Louvre; and the Tiber before I knew the Seine. The qualities and fortunes of Lucullus, Metellus, and Scipio, have ever run more in my head than those of any of my own country; they are all dead, and so is my father as absolutely dead as they, and is removed as far from me and life in eighteen years as they in sixteen hundred; whose memory, nevertheless, friendship and society, I do not cease to hug and embrace with a very perfect and lively union. Nay, of my own inclination, I render myself more attentive to the dead; they no longer help themselves, and therefore, methinks, they more require my assistance; 'tis there that gratitude appears in its full lustre; benefits are not so generously placed where there is retrogradation and reflection. Arcesilaus[2] going to visit Ctesibius, who was sick, and finding him in a very poor condition, privately conveyed some money under his pillow; and, by concealing it from him, acquitted him moreover from the acknowledgment due to such a benefit. Such as have merited from me friendship and gratitude, have never lost them by being no more; I have better and more carefully paid them when gone, and ignorant of what I did; I speak more kindly and affectionately of my friends when they can no longer know

His particular liking to the city of Rome.

Gratitude towards the dead.

[1] *Rome.*

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, iv. 17.

it. I have had a hundred quarrels in defending Pompey, and upon the account of Brutus; this acquaintance does yet continue betwixt us; I have no other hold even of present things but by my fancy. Finding myself of no use to this age, I throw myself back upon that other; and am so childishly enamoured of the free, just, and flourishing state of ancient Rome (for I neither love it in its birth nor old age), that I interest myself in it to a degree of passion; and therefore cannot so often review the situation of their streets and houses, and ruins as profound as the antipodes, but that it always puts me into the dumps. Is it by nature, or through error of fancy, that the sight of the places which we know have been frequented and inhabited by persons whose memories are recommended in story, does in some sort work more upon us than to hear a recital of their acts, or to read their writings? *Tanta vis admonitionis inest in locis! . . . . . Et id quidem in hac urbe infinitum; quacumque enim ingredimur, in aliquam historiam vestigium ponimus.*[1] "So great a power of admonition is in places; and truly in this city so infinite, that which way soever we go we tread upon some history." It pleases me to consider their face, port, and vestments; I ruminate those great names betwixt my teeth, and make them ring in my own ears: *ego illos veneror, et tantis nominibus semper assurgo.*[2] "I reverence them, and rise up in honour of so great names." Of things that are in some part great and admirable, I admire even the common parts; I could wish to see her people talk, walk, and sup together. It were ingratitude to contemn the relics and images of so many worthy and valiant men as I have, as it were, seen live and die, and who, by their example, give us so many good instructions, knew we how to follow them.

Rome the common and universal city.

And moreover, this very Rome that we now see, deserves to be beloved; so long, and by so many titles, confederate to our crown; the only common and universal city. The sovereign magistrate

[1] Cicero, *de Finib.* 5, 1 and 2. [2] Seneca, *Epist.* 64.

that commands there is equally acknowledged and obeyed elsewhere; 'tis the metropolitan city of all the Christian nations; the Spanish and French are there at home; to be a prince of this state there needs no more but to be a prince of Christendom, no matter of what part. There is no place upon earth that heaven has embraced with such an influence and constancy of favour; her very ruins are glorious and great:—

Laudandis pretiosior ruinis:[1]

"More glorious by her ruins made:"

she yet in her very tomb retains the marks and image of empire: *ut palam sit, uno in loco gaudentis opus esse naturæ.*[2] "That it may be manifest that nature is in one place enamoured of her own work." Some would blame and be angry at themselves to perceive themselves tickled with so vain a pleasure; our humours are never too vain, that are pleasant; let them be what they would, that did constantly content an honest man of common understanding, I could not have the heart to pity him.

How Montaigne is obliged to fortune.

I am very much obliged to fortune in that to this very hour, she has offered me no outrage beyond what I was able to bear. May it not be her custom to let those live in quiet by whom she is not importuned?

Quanto quisque sibi plura negaverit,
A diis plura feret: nil cupientium
Nudus castra peto . . .
Multa petentibus
Desunt multa.[3]

"The more a man himself denies,
The more indulgent heaven supplies.
I, to no wild desires a slave,
Join with the few that nothing crave;
He that, repining, covets more,
Is ever wanting, ever poor."

[1] Sidonius Apoll., *Carm.* xxiii. Narbo, v. 62.

[2] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* iii. 5.

[3] Horace, *Od.* iii. 16, 21, and 42.

If she continues so, she will dismiss me very well satisfied:—

Nihil supra.
Deos lacesso.[1]

"Nor for aught more
The Gods implore."

But beware the shock! There are a thousand that perish in the port. I easily comfort myself for what shall happen here when I am gone; present things trouble me enough:—

Fortunæ cætera mando:[2]

"To fortune I leave all the rest:"

besides, I have not that strong obligation that they say ties men to the future, by the children that succeed to their name and honour; and perhaps ought less to covet them if they are to be so much desired. I am but too much tied to the world, and to this life of myself; I am content to be in fortune's power by circumstances properly necessary to my being, without otherwise enlarging her jurisdiction over me, and have never thought that to be without children was a defect that ought to render life less complete, or less contented. Sterility has its conveniences too. Children are of the number of things that are not so much to be desired, especially now that it would be so hard to make them good: *Bona jam nec nasci licet, ita corrupta sunt semina.*[3] "The seed of all things is so corrupt that nothing worthy can be born thence," and yet they are justly to be lamented by such as lose them when they have them.

Children not much to be coveted, and why.

He who left me my house in charge, foretold that I was like to ruin it, considering my humour so little inclined to look after household affairs. But he was mistaken. For I am in the same condition now as when I first entered into it, if not better; and yet without office, or any place of profit.

As to the rest, if fortune has never done me any violent or

[1] Horaca. *Od.* ii. 18, 11. [2] Ovid, *Metam.* ii. 140. [3] Tertullian, *de Pudicitiâ.*

extraordinary injury, neither has she done me any particular favour. Whatever we derive from her bounty, was there above an hundred years before my time. I have, as to my own particular, no essential and solid good, that I stand indebted for to her liberality. She has indeed done me some airy honours, and titular favours without substance, and those in truth she has not granted, but offered me, who, God knows, am all material, and who take nothing but what is real and massy too for current pay; and who, if I durst confess so much, would hardly think avarice less excusable than ambition, or pain less to be avoided than shame, or health less to be coveted than learning, or riches than nobility.

Amongst those empty favours of hers, there is none that so much pleases the vain humour natural to me as a genuine bull of Roman citizenship, that was granted me when I was last there,[1] pompous in seals and gilded letters; and granted with all courtesy and liberality. And because these things are couched in a mixed style, more or less favourable, and that before I myself saw it, I should have been glad to have seen a copy of one, I will, to satisfy such as are sick of the same curiosity, transcribe it here in form:—

Quod Horatius Maximus, Martius Cecius, Alexander Mutus, almæ urbis conservatores, de illustrissimo viro Michaele Montano, equite Sancti Michaelis, et a cubiculo regis christianissimi, romanâ civitate donando, ad Senatum retulerunt; S. P. Q. R. de eâ re ita fieri censuit.

Cum, veteri more et instituto, cupide illi semper studioseque suscepti sint, qui virtute ac nobilitate præstantes, magno reipublicæ nostræ usui atque ornamento fuissent, vel esse aliquando possent: nos, majorum nostrorum exemplo atque auctoritate permoti, præclaram hanc consuetudinem nobis imitandam ac servandam fore censemus. Quamobrem cum

[1] *At Rome.*

illustrissimus Michael Montanus, eques sancti Michaelis, et a cubiculo regis christianissimi, romani nominis studiosissimus, et familiæ laude atque splendore, et propriis virtutum meritis dignissimus sit, qui summo senatus populique romani judicio ac studio in Romanam civitatem adsciscatur; placere senatui P. Q. R. illustrissimum Michaelem Montanum, rebus omnibus ornatissimum, atque huic inclyto populo carissimum, ipsum posterosque in romanam civitatem adscribi, ornarique omnibus et præmiis et honoribus, quibus illi fruuntur, qui cives patriciique romani nati, aut jure optimo facti sunt. In quo censere senatum P. Q. R., se non tam illi jus civitatis largiri, quam debitum tribuere, neque magis beneficium dare, quam ab ipso accipere, qui, hoc civitatis munere accipiendo, singulari civitatem ipsam ornamento atque honore effecerit. Quam quidem S. C. auctoritatem iidem conservatores per senatus P. Q. R. scribas in acta referri, atque in Capitolii curiâ servari, privilegiumque hujusmodi fieri, solitoque urbis sigillo communiri curarunt. Anno ab urbe conditâ IICↀXCCCXXXI. Post Christum natum M. D.LXXXI., III idus martii.

HORATIUS FUSCUS,
sacri S. P. Q. R. *scriba*,
VINCENT. MARTHOLUS,
sacri S. P. Q. R. *scriba*.[1]

[1] "Upon the report made to the Senate by Orazio Massimi, Marzio Cecio, Alessandro Muti, conservators of the city of Rome, touching the admission to the citizenship of Rome of the most illustrious Michael de Montaigne, knight of the order of St. Michael, and gentleman of the bedchamber of his Most Christian Majesty, the senate and people of Rome have thus decreed:—

"Considering that, by ancient usage, those have ever been eagerly adopted amongst us who, excelling in virtue and nobility, have served and done honour to the republic, or might probably be expected to do so; we, full of respect for the example and authority of our ancestors, deem that it becomes us to imitate and keep up this laudable custom. Wherefore, the most illustrious Michael de Montaigne, knight of St. Michael, and gentleman of the chamber of his Most Christian Majesty, being desirous of receiving the title of Citizen of Rome, and being, from the rank and lustre of his family and his own personal qualities, fully worthy, in the supreme judgment of the Senate and people of Rome, of being enrolled among the citizens of Rome; therefore the senate and people of Rome are pleased to decree that the most illustrious Michael de Montaigne, as a man rich in all great qualities, and very dear to the sacred city, be, for himself and his posterity, inscribed a Roman citizen, entitled to all the honours and advantages which belong to those who are either born citizens and patricians of Rome, or become such by reason of their peculiar merits. And herein the senate and people of Rome deem that they are paying a just debt, rather than granting a mere favour; that they are

Being before burgess of no city at all, I am glad to be made one of the most noble that ever was, or ever will be. If other men would consider themselves attentively as I do, they would, as I do, discover themselves to be full of inanity and foppery; rid myself of which I cannot, without making away with myself. We are all leavened with it, as well one as another; but they who are not aware on't have the better bargain, and yet I know not whether they have or no.

Why man does not love to know and observe himself.

This opinion and common custom to observe others more than ourselves, has very much relieved us that way. 'Tis a very displeasing object; we can there see nothing but misery and vanity. Nature, that we may not be dejected with the sight of our own deformities, has wisely thrust the action of seeing outward. We go forward with the current, but to turn back towards ourselves is a painful motion. Thus is the sea moved and troubled when the waves are driven back against one another. Observe, says every one, the motion of the heavens, the revolution of public affairs; observe the quarrel of such a person, take notice of such a one's pulse, of such another's last will and testament; in sum, be always looking high or low, on one side, before or behind you. It was a paradoxical command, anciently given us by the god at Delphos: "Look into yourself, discover yourself, keep close to yourself; call back your mind and will, that elsewhere consume themselves, into yourself; you run out, you spill yourself, carry a more steady hand. Men betray you, men spill you, men steal you from yourself. Dost not thou see that this world keeps all its sight confined within, and its eyes open to contemplate itself? 'Tis always vanity for thee, both within and without; but 'tis less vanity when less extended. 'Excepting thee, O man,' said

receiving, rather than conferring a benefit on one, who, in accepting the citizenship of Rome, singularly honours and adorns the city. The conservators have caused this decree to be transcribed by the secretaries of the senate and people of Rome, that it may be deposited among the archives of the Capitol; and have caused this act to be sealed with the city seal. Given in the year of Rome 2331; and of Christ 1581, this 13th of March,

"ORAZIO FOSCO, secretary to the senate and people of Rome,

"VINCENTIO MARTOLI, secretary to the senate and people of Rome."

that god, 'everything studies itself first, and has bounds to its labours and desires, according to its need.' There is nothing so empty and necessitous as thou, who embracest the universe. Thou art the explorator without knowledge, the magistrate without jurisdiction; and, in short, the fool in the play."

CHAPTER X.

OF MANAGING ONE'S WILL.

FEW things, in comparison of what commonly affect other men, move, or, to say better, possess me; for 'tis but reason they should concern a man, provided they do not take possession of him. I am very solicitous, both by study and reasoning, to enlarge this privilege of insensibility, which is naturally raised to a pretty high degree in me; so that consequently I espouse or am very much moved with very few things. I have my sight clear enough, but I fix it upon very few objects; my sense delicate and tender enough, but an apprehension and application stubborn and negligent. I am very unwilling to engage myself; as much as in me lies, I employ myself wholly upon myself; and in this very subject should rather choose to curb and restrain my affection from plunging itself over head and ears into it, it being a subject that I possess at the mercy of others, and over which fortune has more right than I; so that even so much as to health, which I so much value, it were necessary for me not so passionately to covet and desire it as to find diseases insupportable. A man ought to moderate himself betwixt the hatred of pain and the love of pleasure, and Plato[1] sets down a middle path of life betwixt both. But against such affections as wholly carry

[1] *Laws*, vii.

me away from myself and fix me elsewhere, against these, I say, I oppose myself with my utmost force and power. 'Tis my opinion that a man should lend himself to others, and only give himself to himself. Were my will easy to lend itself out, and to be swayed, I should not stick there; I am too tender, both by nature and custom :—

Fugax rerum, securaque in otia natus.[1]

"Born and bred up in negligence and ease
I fly from business as from disease."

The hot and obstinate disputes wherein my adversary would at last have the better, the issue that would render my heat and obstinacy disgraceful, would perhaps vex me to the last degree. Should I set myself to it at the rate that others do, my soul would never have the force to bear the emotions and alarms that attend those who pursue and grasp at so much; it would immediately be disordered by this inward agitation. If sometimes I have been put upon the management of other men's affairs, I have promised to take them in hand, but not into my lungs and liver; to take them upon me, not to incorporate them; to take pains for, but not to be impassioned about them. I have a care of them, but I will not brood upon them. I have enough to do to order and govern the domestic tumults that I have in my own veins and bowels, without introducing a crowd of other men's affairs, and am sufficiently concerned about my own proper and natural business, without meddling with the concerns of others. Those who know how much they owe to themselves, and how many offices they are bound to of their own, find that nature has given them this commission, full enough to keep them from being ever idle: "Thou hast business enough at home, look to that."

Men let themselves out to hire; their faculties are not for themselves, but to be employed for those to whom they have enslaved themselves; their hirers are in their houses, not themselves. This common humour pleases not me. We

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* iii. 2, 9.

must be thrifty of the liberty of our souls, and never let them out but upon just occasions, which are very few, if we judge aright. Do but observe such as have accustomed themselves to be at every one's call, they do it indifferently upon all, as well upon little as upon great occasions, in that which nothing concerns them, as much as in what imports them most; they intrude themselves indifferently wherever there is business and obligation, and are without life, when not in the bustle of affairs: *In negotiis sunt negotii causâ;*[1] they only seek business for business sake. It is not so much that they will go, as that they cannot stand still; like a rolling stone that does not stop till it can go no farther. Business, by a certain sort of men, is thought a mark of capacity and honour; their souls seek repose in motion, as children do by being rocked in a cradle; they may pronounce themselves as serviceable to their friends as troublesome to themselves. No one distributes his money to others, but every one distributes his time and his life.[2] There is nothing of which we are so prodigal as of these two things, of which to be thrifty would be both commendable and useful. I am of a quite contrary humour; I look to myself, and commonly covet with no great ardour what I do desire, and desire little, and employ and busy myself but rarely and temperately in the same way. Whatever they take in hand, they do it with their utmost power and vehemence. There are so many dangerous steps, that, for the more safety, we must a little lightly and superficially slide through the world, and not rush through it. Pleasure itself is painful in its depth:—

> Incedis per ignes
> Suppositos cineri doloso.[3]
>
> "Thou upon glowing coals dost tread,
> Under deceitful ashes hid."

The citizens of Bordeaux chose me mayor of their city at

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 22.
[2] Id. *de Brevitate vitæ*, c. 3.
[3] Horace, *Od.* ii. 1, 7.

a time when I was at a distance from France,[1] and still more remote from any such thought. I begged to be excused, but I was told that I had committed an error in so doing, and the greater, because the king had moreover interposed his command in the affair. 'Tis an office that ought to be looked upon so much more honourable, as it has no other pay nor advantage than the bare honour of its execution. It continues two years, but may be extended by a second election, which very rarely happens. It was so to me,[2] and had never been so but twice before, some years ago to Monsieur Lanssac, and lately to Monsieur de Biron, marshal of France, in whose place I succeeded, and left mine to Monsieur de Matignon, marshal of France also. Proud of so noble a fraternity,

Montaigne obliged to serve the office of mayor of Bordeaux.

Uterque bonus pacis bellique minister.[3]

"Both fit for governing in peace and war."

Fortune would have a hand in my promotion, by this particular circumstance, which she put in of her own, not altogether vain; for Alexander disdained the ambassadors of Corinth, who came to make him a tender of the burgess-ship of their city; but when they proceeded to lay before him that Bacchus and Hercules were also in the register, he thankfully accepted the offer.[4]

At my arrival, I faithfully and conscientiously represented myself to them for such as I find myself to be; a man without memory, without vigilance, without experience, and without vigour; but withal without hatred, without ambition, without avarice, and without violence. That they might be informed and know what they were to expect from my service, and being that the knowledge they had had of my father, and the honour

The character he gave of himself to the magistrates of Bordeaux.

[1] When he was at the baths of Della Villa, near Lucca, September, 1581.

[2] A very clear proof that the people of Bordeaux were satisfied with his administration, though Balzac (*Dissert.* 19,) insinuates the contrary, without assigning any ground for the imputation

[3] *Æneid*, xi. 658.

[4] Seneca, *de Beneficiis*, i. 13, and Plutarch, *On the Three Forms of Government*, in relating this anecdote, do not mention Bacchus. Plutarch names the *Megarians*, instead of the *Corinthians*.

they had for his memory, had been the only motives to confer this upon me, I plainly told them that I should be very sorry anything should make so great an impression upon me, as their affairs and the concerns of their city had done upon him, whilst he had the same government to which they had preferred me. I very well remember, when a boy, to have seen him in his old age, tormented with and solicitous about the public affairs, neglecting the soft repose of his own house, to which the declension of his age had attached him for several years before, the management of his own affairs, and his health, and certainly despising his own life, which was in great danger of being lost, by being engaged in long and painful journeys on their behalf. Such was he, and this humour of his proceeded from a marvellous goodness of nature. Never was there a more charitable and popular spirited man. Yet this which I commend in others, I do not love to follow myself, and am not without excuse.

Why the sages recommended it to men to neglect themselves for the sake of the public.

He had heard that a man must forget himself for his neighbour, and that particular individuals were in no manner of consideration in comparison with the general concern. Most of the rules and precepts of this world run this way, to drive us out of ourselves into the world, for the benefit of public society; they thought to do a great feat, to divert us from ourselves, presuming we were but too much fixed at home, and by a too natural inclination, and have said all they could to that purpose; for 'tis no new thing for wise men to preach things as they serve, not as they are. Truth has its obstructions, inconveniences, and incompatibilities with us; we must be often deceived, that we may not deceive ourselves, and shut our eyes, and stupefy our understandings, to redress and amend them: *Imperiti enim judicant, et qui frequenter in hoc ipsum fallendi sunt, ne errent.*[1] "For the ignorant judge, and therefore are oft to be deceived, lest they should err." When they prescribe us to love three, four,

[1] Quintilian, *Instit. Orat.* 11, 17.

fifty degrees of things above ourselves, they do like archers, who, to hit the mark, take their aim a great deal higher than the butt; to set a crooked stick straight, we bend it the contrary way.

I take it that in the temple of Pallas, as we see in all other religions, there were apparent mysteries to be shown to the people, and others, more secret and high, that were only to be shown to such as were professed; 'tis likely that in these the true point of friendship, that every one owes to himself, is to be found; not a false friendship, that makes us embrace glory, knowledge, riches, and the like, with a principal and immoderate affection, as members of our being, nor an indiscreet and effeminate friendship, wherein it happens, as with ivy, that decays and ruins the walls it embraces; but a sound and regular friendship, equally useful and pleasant. Who knows the duties of this friendship, and practises them, is truly of the cabinet council of the muses, and has attained the summit of human wisdom and our happiness; such a one, exactly knowing what he owes to himself, will in his part find that he ought to apply the use of the world and of other men to himself, and, to do this, to contribute to the public society the duties and offices appertaining to him. Who does not in some sort live to others, does not live much to himself: *Qui sibi amicus est, scito hunc amicum omnibus esse.*[1] "He who is his own friend is a friend to everybody else." The principal charge we have is, to every one his own conduct, and 'tis for this that we are here. As he who should forget to live a virtuous and holy life, and should think he acquitted himself of his duty in instructing and training up others to it would be a fool; even so he who abandons his own particular healthful and pleasant living to serve others, takes, in my opinion, a wrong and an unnatural course.

He that is too eager in the exercise of an

I would not that men should refuse, in the employments they take upon them, their atten-

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 6.

office cannot manage it with prudence or equity.

tion, pains, their eloquence, and their sweat and blood, in time of need:—

> Non ipse pro caris amicis,
> Aut patriâ, timidus perire:[1]

> "And for his friend or country's good
> Would never fear to spill his blood:"

but 'tis only as a loan, and incidentally; his mind being always in repose and in health; not without action, but without vexation, without passion. To be simply doing costs him so little that he acts even sleeping; but he must set on the motion with discretion; for the body receives the offices imposed upon it, just according to what they are; the mind often extends, and makes them heavier at its own expense, giving them what measure it pleases. Men perform like things with several sorts of endeavour, and different contentions of the will; the one does well enough without the other; for how many people hazard themselves every day in war, without any concern which way it goes, and thrust themselves into the dangers of battles, the loss of which will not break their next night's sleep? And such a man may be at home, out of danger, which he durst not have looked upon, who is more passionately concerned for the issue of this war, and whose soul is more anxious about events, than the soldier who stakes his life and blood in the quarrel. I could have engaged myself in public employments, without quitting myself a nail's breadth, and have given myself to others without abandoning myself. This sharpness and violence of desires more hinders than it advances the execution of what we undertake,[2] fills us with impatience against slow or contrary events, and with heat and suspicion against those with whom we have to do. We never carry on that thing well by which we are prepossessed and led:—

[1] Horace, *Od.* 4, 9, 51.

[2] "Omnis fere cupiditas ipsa sibi in id, in quod properat, opponitur."—Seneca, *de Irâ*, i. 12.

Male cuncta ministrat
Impetus.[1]

"For overheat doth carry on things ill."

He who therein employs only his judgment and address proceeds more cheerfully; he counterfeits, he gives way, he defers all things at his ease, according to the necessities of occasions; he fails in his attempts, without trouble and affliction, ready and entire for a new effort; he always rides bridle in hand. In him who is drunk with violent and tyrannic intention, we see of necessity much imprudence and injustice; the impetuosity of his desire carries him away; these are rash motions, and, if fortune does not very much assist, of very little fruit. Philosophy wills that in the revenge of injuries received we should strip ourselves of choler, not that the chastisement should be less, but, on the contrary, that the revenge may be the better and more heavy, which it conceives will be by this impetuosity hindered. For anger does not only trouble, but of itself does also weary, the arm of those who chastise; this fire benumbs and wastes their force; as in precipitation, *festinatio tarda est*,[2] "haste fetters itself;" *Ipsa se velocitas implicat*.[3] For example, according to what I commonly see, avarice has no greater impediment than itself; the more bent and vigorous it is, the less it rakes together, and commonly sooner grows rich, when disguised in a vizor of liberality.

That the chastisement of offences ought to be performed without anger.

A very honest gentleman, and a particular friend of mine, had like to have cracked his brains by a too passionate attention and affection to the affairs of a certain prince, his master;[4] which master has thus set himself out to me: "That he foresees the weight of accidents as well as another; but that in those for which there is no remedy he presently resolves upon suffering; in others, having taken all the necessary precaution, which, by the vivacity of his understanding,

[1] Statius, *Thebaid*, x. 704.
[2] Quintus Curtius, ix. 9, 12.
[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 44, whose words are slightly different.
[4] Probably the King of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV. of France.

he can presently do, he quietly awaits what may follow." And, in truth, I have accordingly seen him maintain a great nonchalance and liberty of action, and serenity of countenance, in very great and difficult affairs; I find him much greater and of greater capacity in adverse than prosperous fortune; his losses are to him more glorious than his victories, and his mourning than his triumph.

It is an advantage in gaming to keep one's temper, both in gain and loss.

Do but consider that, even in vain and frivolous actions, as at chess, tennis, and the like, this eager and ardent engaging with an impetuous desire immediately throws the mind and members into indiscretion and disorder; a man confounds and hinders himself; he that carries himself the most moderately, both towards gain and loss, has always his wits about him; the less peevish and passionate he is at play, he plays much more advantageously and surely.

As to the rest, we hinder the mind's seizure and hold, in giving it so many things to seize upon; some things we are only to offer to it, to tie others to it, and others to incorporate with it; it can feel and discern all things, but ought to feed on nothing but itself, and should be instructed in what properly concerns itself, that is properly of its own having and substance. The laws of nature teach us exactly what we need. After the sages have told us that, according to nature, no one is indigent, and that every one is so according to opinion,[1] they very subtly distinguish betwixt the desires that proceed from her and those that proceed from the disorder of our own fancy; those of which we can see the end are hers; those that fly before us, and of which we can see no end, are our own. Want of goods is easily repaired; poverty of soul is irreparable:—

> Nam si, quod satis est homini, id satis esse potesset,
> Hoc sat erat; nunc, quum hoc non est, qui credimus porro
> Divitias ullas animum mi explere potesse? [2]

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 16.

[2] Lucil. *lib.* v. *apud Nonium Marcellum*, v. § 98.

"If what's for man enough, enough could be,
It were enough; but as we plainly see
That won't suffice, how can I e'er believe
That any wealth my mind content can give?"

Socrates seeing a great quantity of riches, jewels, and furniture of great value, carried in pomp through the city: "How many things," said he, "do I not desire!"[1] Metrodorus lived on twelve ounces a day; Epicurus upon less;[2] Metrocles slept in winter abroad among sheep; in summer in the cloisters of churches:[3] *Sufficit ad id natura, quod poscit.*[4] "Nature provides for its own exigences." Cleanthes lived by the labour of his own hands, and boasted, "That Cleanthes, if he would, could maintain yet another Cleanthes."[5]

Why his necessities may be extended a little beyond the necessary demands of nature.

If that which nature exactly and originally requires of us for the conservation of our being be too little, (as, in truth, what it is and how very cheap life may be maintained cannot be better made out than by this consideration; that it is so little that by its littleness it escapes the gripe and shock of fortune,) let us dispense with a little more; let us call every one of our habits and conditions nature; let us tax and treat ourselves by this measure; let us stretch our appurtenances and accounts so far; for so far I fancy we have some excuse. Custom is a second nature, and no less powerful. What is wanting to my custom I hold to be wanting to me; and I should be almost as well content that they took away my life, as take me far from the way wherein I have so long lived. I am no more in a condition for any great change, nor to put myself into a new and unwonted course, though never so much to my advantage. 'Tis past the time for me to become other than what I am; and as I should complain of any great adventure that should now befall me, that it came not in time to be enjoyed:—

1 Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 32.
2 Seneca, *Epist.* 18.
3 Plutarch, *That Vice alone is sufficient to make a man unhappy.*
4 Seneca, *Epist.* 90.
5 It was Zeno who said this of Cleanthes, his disciple. See Laertius, *Life of Cleanthes.*

Quo mihi fortunâ, si non conceditur uti?[1]

"For what are fortune's gifts, if I'm denied
Their cheerful use?"

so should I complain of any inward acquest. It were almost better never, than so late, to become an honest man, and well understanding in living, when a man has no longer to live. I, who am going, would readily resign to any newcomer all the wisdom I have acquired for the world's commerce: "after meat comes mustard." I want no goods of which I can make no use; of what use is knowledge to him that has lost his head? 'Tis adding insult to injury for fortune to offer us presents that will only inspire us with a just despite that we had them not in their due season. Guide me no more, I can no longer go. Of so many parts as make a perfect man, patience suffices. Give an excellent treble to a chorister that has rotten lungs, and eloquence to a hermit exiled in the deserts of Arabia. There needs no art to further a fall; the end finds itself of itself, at the conclusion of every affair. My world is at an end, my form expired; I belong to the past, and am bound to authorize it, and to conform my end to it. I will here mention, by way of example, that the recent eclipse by the pope of ten days,[2] has taken me so low that I cannot well get used to it; I belong to the years wherein we kept another kind of account. So ancient and so long a custom challenges and calls me back to it; I am constrained to be somewhat heretical in this point; impatient of any, even though a corrective innovation. My imagination, in spite of my teeth, always pushes me ten days forward or backward, and is ever murmuring in my ears, "This rule concerns those who are going to be." If health itself, sweet as it is, returns to me by fits, 'tis rather to give me cause of regret than fruition of itself; I have no place left to keep it in. Time leaves me, without which nothing can be possessed.

[1] Horace, *Epist.* i. 5, 12.

[2] Gregory XIII., who in 1582 had the calendar altered by Louis Lilio, Peter Chacon, and Christopher Clavius. In France they made the alteration by skipping at once from the 9th to the 20th of December, 1582.

Oh, what little account should I make of those great elective dignities that I see in such esteem in the world, that are never conferred but upon men who are taking leave of it, in whom they do not so much regard how well he will discharge his trust, as how short his administration will be; from the very entry they look at the exit. In short, I am about to finish this man, and not to rebuild another. By long habit this form is, in me, turned into substance, and fortune into nature.

I say, therefore, that every one of us feeble creatures is excusable in thinking that to be his own which is comprised under this measure; but withal, beyond these limits, 'tis nothing but confusion; 'tis the largest extent we can grant to our own claim. The more business we create ourselves, the more we amplify our possession, so much more do we expose ourselves to the blows and adversities of fortune.[1] The career of our desires ought to be circumscribed, and restrained to a short limit of near and contiguous conveniences; and ought moreover, to perform their course, not in a right line, that ends elsewhere, but in a circle, of which the two points by a short wheel meet and terminate in ourselves. Actions that are carried on without this reflection (a near and essential reflection I mean), such as those of ambitious and avaricious men, and many more who run point blank, and whose career always carries them before themselves, such actions, I say, are erroneous and sickly.

An honest man is not corrupted by the employment he exercises.

Most of our business is farce: *Mundus universus exercet histrioniam.* "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players." We must play our part well, but withal as the part of a borrowed personage; we must not make a real essence of a mask and outward appearance, nor of a strange person our own; we cannot distinguish the skin from the shirt; 'tis enough to meal the face without mealing the breast. I see some who transform and transubstantiate themselves into as

1 "L'homme tient par ses vœux à mille choses: plus il augmente ses attachemens, plus il multiplie ses peines."—Rousseau, *Emile*, liv. v.

many new shapes and new beings as they undertake employments, and who prelate themselves even to the heart and liver, and carry their office along with them, even to the close stool; I cannot make them distinguish the salutations that are made to them from those made to their commission, their train, or their mule: *Tanquam se fortunæ permittunt, etiam ut naturam dediscant;*[1] "They so much give themselves up to fortune as even to forget nature;" they swell and puff up their souls, and their natural way of speaking, according to the height of their magisterial place. The mayor of Bordeaux and Montaigne have ever been two, by very manifest separation. To be an advocate or a treasurer, a man must not be ignorant of the knavery of such callings; an honest man is not accountable for the vice or folly of his business, and yet ought not to refuse to take the calling upon him; 'tis the custom of his country, and there is money to be got by it; a man must live by the world, and make his best of it, such as it is. But the judgment of an emperor ought to be above his empire, and view and consider it as an accident; and he ought to know how to enjoy himself apart from it, and to communicate himself as James and Peter, to himself at least.

Montaigne, by espousing a party, did not espouse its fury, injustice, and ridiculous whimsies.

I cannot engage myself so deep and so entire; when my will gives me to a party, 'tis not with so violent an obligation that my judgment is infected with it. In the present broils of this kingdom, my interest in the one side has not made me forget either the laudable qualities of some of our adversaries, nor those that are reproachable in my own party. People generally adore all of their own side; for my part I do not so much as excuse most things in those of mine; a good book has never the worse grace for being written against me. The knot of the controversy excepted, I have always kept myself in equanimity and pure indifference: *Neque extra necessitates belli præcipuum odium gero:*[2] "And have no express hatred

[1] Petronius, *apud* John of Salisbury, *Policratic.* iii. 8.

[2] Quintus Curtius, iii. 2, 18.

beyond the necessity of war;" for which I am pleased with myself, and the more, because I see others commonly fail in the contrary way. Such as extend their anger and hatred beyond the dispute in question, as most men do, show that they spring from some other occasion and particular cause; like one who, being cured of an ulcer, has yet a fever remaining, by which it appears that the ulcer had another more concealed beginning. It is because they are not concerned in the common cause, because it is wounding to the state and common interest, but are only nettled by reason of their private and particular concern; this is why they are so especially animated, beyond justice and public reason: *Non tam omnia universi, quam ea quæ ad quemque pertinerent, singuli carpebant.*[1] "Every one was not so much angry against things in general, as against those that particularly concerned himself." I would have matters go well on our side; but if they do not, I shall not run mad. I am heartily for the right party; but I do not affect to be taken notice of for an especial enemy to others, and beyond the general quarrel. I am a mortal enemy to this vicious form of censure: "He is of the league, because he admires the Duke of Guise. He is astonished at the King of Navarre's valour and diligence, and therefore he is a Huguenot. He finds such and such faults in the king, and therefore he is seditious in his heart;" and I would not grant to the magistrate that he did well in condemning a book, because it had placed a heretic[2] among the best poets of the time. Shall we not dare to say of a thief that he has a handsome leg? Because a woman is a strumpet, must it needs follow that she has a stinking breath? Did they, in the wiser ages, revoke the proud title of Capitolinus, they had before conferred upon Marcus Manlius, as the preserver of religion and the public liberty; did they damn the memory of his liberality, his feats of arms, and the military recompense granted to his virtue, because he afterwards

[1] Livy, xxxiv. 36.

[2] Theodore Beza, whose poems have already been referred to

aspired to the sovereignty, to the prejudice of the laws of his country? If they take a hatred against an advocate, he will not be allowed the next day to be eloquent. I have elsewhere spoken of the zeal that pushes on worthy men to the like faults. For my part I can say: "such an one does this ill, and that well and virtuously." So, in the prognostics or sinister events of affairs, they will have every one, in his own party, blind or a blockhead; and our persuasion and judgment be subservient, not to truth, but to the project of our desires. I should rather incline towards the other extreme, so much do I fear being suborned by my desire; to which may be added, that I am a little tenderly distrustful of things that I wish.

The indiscreet facility of people in suffering themselves to be imposed upon by the leaders of a party.

I have in my time seen wonders in the way of an indiscreet and prodigious facility in people to suffer their hopes and belief to be led and governed which way has best pleased and served their leaders, through a hundred mistakes one upon another, and through dreams and phantasms. I no more wonder at those who have been blinded and led by the nose by the ape's tricks of Apollonius and Mahomet. Their sense and understanding is absolutely taken away by their passion; their discretion has no longer any other choice than that which smiles upon them, and supports their cause. I principally observed that in the beginning of our intestine distempers; this other, which is sprung up since, in imitation, has surpassed it; by which I am satisfied that it is a quality inseparable from popular errors; after the first that sets out, opinions drive on one another like waves with the wind; you are not part of the body, if you utter a word of objection, and do not follow the common run. But doubtless they wrong the just side, when they go about to assist it with fraud; I have ever been against that practice; 'tis only fit to work upon weak heads; for the sound, there are surer and more honest ways to keep up their courage, and to excuse adverse accidents.

Heaven never saw a greater animosity than that betwixt Cæsar and Pompey, nor ever will; and yet I observe, methinks, in those fine souls a great moderation towards one another; it was a jealousy of honour and command, which did not transport them to a furious and indiscreet hatred, and that was without malignity and detraction; in their hottest exploits upon one another, I discover some traces of respect and good-will; and therefore am of opinion that, had it been possible, each of them would rather have done his business without the ruin of the other, than with it. Take notice how different matters were with Marius and Sylla.

Difference betwixt Cæsar and Pompey's war and that betwixt Marius and Sylla.

We must not precipitate ourselves so headlong after our affections and interest. As, when I was young, I opposed the progress of love, which I perceived to advance too fast upon me, and had a care lest it should at last become so pleasing as to force, captivate, and wholly reduce me to its mercy, so I do the same upon all other occasions, where my will is running on with too warm an appetite; I lean opposite to the side it inclines to, as I find it going to plunge and make itself drunk with its own wine; I evade nourishing its pleasure so far, that I cannot recover it without infinite loss. Souls that, through their own stupidity, only discern things by halves, have this happiness, that they smart the less with hurtful things; 'tis a spiritual leprosy that has some show of health, and such a health as philosophy does not altogether contemn; but yet we have no reason to call it wisdom, as we often do. And after this manner a man mocked Diogenes, who, in the depth of winter, and stark naked, went hugging an image of snow for a trial of his patience; seeing him in this exercise: "Art thou very cold?" said he; "Not at all," replied Diogenes; "Why, then," said the other, "what great and exemplary thing dost thou think thou art doing now?"[1] To estimate a man's firmness, we must know what his suffering is.

[1] Laertius, *Life of Diogenes.* Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Lacedemonians.*

But souls that are to meet with adverse events, and the injuries of fortune in their depth and sharpness, that are to weigh and taste them according to their natural weight and sharpness, let such show their skill in avoiding the causes, and diverting the blow. What did King Cotys do? He paid liberally for the rich and beautiful service of porcelain that had been brought him; but, seeing it was exceedingly brittle, he immediately broke it, in order to prevent so easy a matter of displeasure against his servants.[1] In like manner, I have willingly avoided all confusion in my affairs, and never coveted to have my estate contiguous to those of my relations, and those with whom I coveted a strict friendship; whence matter of unkindness and fallings-out often proceed. I formerly loved cards and dice, but have long since left them off, only for this reason, that though I carry my losses as handsomely as another, I was not quiet within. Let a man of honour, who ought to be sensible of the lie, and who will not take a scurvy excuse for satisfaction, avoid occasions of dispute. I shun melancholic and sour-natured men as I would the plague; and in matters I cannot talk of without emotion and concern, I never meddle, if not compelled by duty: *Melius non incipient quam desinent;*[2] "'Tis better not to begin than to desist." The surest way, then, is to prepare one's self before the occasion.

How Montaigne endeavoured to prevent accidents in the management of his affairs and actions.

I know very well that some wise men have taken another way, and have not feared to grapple and engage to the utmost upon several subjects; these are confident of their own strength, under cover of which they protect themselves in all ill successes, making their patience wrestle and contend with disaster:—

> Velut rupes, vastum quæ prodit in æquor,
> Obvia ventorum furiis, expostaque ponto,
> Vim cunctam atque minas perfert cœlique marisque,
> Ipsa immota manens.[3]

[1] Plutarch, *Apothegms of the Kings.*
[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 72.
[3] *Æneid*, x. 693.

"He, like a solid rock by seas inclosed,
To raging winds and roaring waves opposed,
From his proud summit, looking down, disdains
Their empty menace, and unmoved remains."

Let us never attempt these examples; we shall never come up to them. They set themselves resolutely, and without trouble, to behold the ruin of their country, to which all the good they can contrive or perform is due; this is too much and too rude for our common souls to undergo. Cato gave up the noblest life that ever was upon this account; but it is for us smaller men to fly from the storm as far as we can; we ought to shun pain, instead of cultivating patience, and dip under the blows we cannot parry. Zeno seeing Chremonides, a young man whom he loved, draw near to sit down by him, suddenly started up, and Cleanthes asking him the reason why he did so: "I hear," said he, "that physicians especially order repose, and forbid emotion, in all excitements."[1] Socrates does not say: "Do not surrender to the charms of beauty; stand your ground, and do your utmost to oppose it." "Fly it," says he, "shun the sight and encounter of it, as of a powerful poison, that darts and wounds at a distance."[2] And his good disciple,[3] either feigning or reciting, but in my opinion rather reciting than feigning, the rare perfections of that great Cyrus, makes him distrustful of his own strength to resist the charms of the divine beauty of the illustrious Panthea, his captive, and committing the visiting and keeping of her to another, who could not have so much license as himself. And the Holy Spirit, in like manner: "Lead us not into temptation."[4] We do not pray that our reason may not be combated and overcome by concupiscence, but that it should not be so much as tried by it; that we should not be brought into a state wherein we should have so much as to suffer the approaches, solicitations, and temptations of sin; and we beg of Almighty God to keep our con-

1 Laertius, *Life of Zeno*, vii. 17.
2 Xenophon, *Memoir upon Socrates*, i. 3, 13.
3 Xenophon, *Cyropædia*, i. 3, 3, &c.
4 *St. Matthew*, vi. 13.

sciences quiet, fully and perfectly delivered from all commerce of evil.

Such as say that they have reason for their avenging passion, or any other sort of troublesome agitation of mind, do often say true, as things now are, but not as they were; they speak to us when the causes of their error are nourished and advanced by themselves; but look back, recall these causes to their beginning, and there you will put them to a nonplus. Will they have their fault less, for being of longer continuance; think they of an unjust beginning the sequel can be just? Whoever desires the good of his country, as I do, without fretting and pining, will be troubled, but will not swoon to see it threatened either with its own ruin, or a not less ruinous continuance; poor vessel, that the waves, the wind, and the pilot, toss and steer to so contrary designs!

In tam diversa, magister,
Ventus, et unda, trahunt.[1]

He who does not gape after the favour of princes, as after a thing he cannot live without, does not much concern himself at the coldness of their reception and countenance, nor at the inconstancy of their wills. He who does not brood over his children or his honours with a slavish propension, ceases not to live commodiously enough after their loss. He who does good principally for his own satisfaction will not be much troubled to see men judge of his actions contrary to his merit. A quarter of an ounce of patience will provide sufficiently against such inconveniences. I find ease in this receipt, redeeming myself in the beginning as cheap as I can; and find that by this means I have escaped much trouble and many difficulties. With very little effort I stop the first sally of my emotions, and quit the subject that begins to be troublesome, before it carries one away. He who stops not the start will hardly ever be able to stop the career; he who cannot keep them out will never get them out, when they are once

[1] Montaigne has translated the quotation before giving it. I know not who the author is. Some of the editions mention Buchanan, but without referring us to any particular work of that poet.

in; he who cannot crush them at the beginning, will never do it after; nor ever keep himself from falling, if he cannot re cover himself when first he begins to totter: *Etenim ipsæ se impellunt, ubi semel a ratione discessum est; ipsaque sibi imbecillitas indulget, in altumque provehitur imprudens, nec reperit locum consistendi.*[1] "For they throw themselves headlong, when once they lose their reason; and frailty so far indulges itself that it is unawares carried out into the deep, and can find no port wherein to come to an anchor." I am betimes sensible of the little breezes that begin to sing and whistle in the shrouds, the forerunners of a storm:—

> Ceu flamina prima
> Cum deprensa fremunt silvis, et cæca volutant
> Murmura, venturos nautis prodentia ventos:[2]
>
> "So winds, when yet unfledged in woods they lie,
> In whispers first their tender voices try;
> Then issue on the main with bellowing rage,
> And storms to trembling mariners presage."

How often have I done myself a manifest injustice, to avoid the hazard of having yet a worse done me by the judges, after an age of vexations, dirty and vile practices, more enemies to my nature than fire or the rack? *Convenit a litibus, quantum licet, et nescio an paulo plus etiam, quam licet, abhorrentem esse; est enim non modo liberale, paululum nonnunquam de suo jure decedere, sed interdum etiam fructuosum.*[3] "A man should be an enemy to all contention as much as he lawfully may, and I know not whether or not something more; for 'tis not only handsome; but sometimes also advantageous too, a little to recede from one's right." Were we wise, we ought to rejoice and boast, as I one day heard a young gentleman of a good family very innocently do, that his mother had lost her suit, as if it had been a cough, a fever, or something very troublesome to keep. Even the favours that fortune might have given me through relationship, or acquaintance with

With what care he avoided law-suits.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 18.
[2] *Æneid*, x. 97.
[3] Cicero, *de Offic.* ii. 18.

those who have sovereign authority in our affairs, I have conscientiously waived, and very carefully avoided employing them to the prejudice of others, and of advancing my pretensions above their true right. In fine, I have so much prevailed by my endeavours (happy 'tis for me I can say), that I am to this day a virgin from all suits at law, though they have made me very fair offers, and with very just ground, would I have hearkened to them; and a virgin from quarrels too; I have almost passed over a long life without any offence of moment, either active or passive, or without ever hearing myself called by a worse word than my own name; a rare favour of heaven!

The most violent passions raised from trifling causes.

Our greatest agitations have ridiculous motives and causes; what ruin did our last Duke of Burgundy run into about a cart-load of sheepskins![1] And was not the engraving of a seal the first and principal cause of the greatest commotion that this machine of the world ever underwent?[2]—for Pompey and Cæsar were but the offsets and continuation of the two others; and I have in my time seen the wisest heads in this kingdom assembled with great ceremony, and at the public expense, about treaties and agreements, of which the real decision in the mean time absolutely depended upon the ladies' cabinet council, and the inclination of some woman body. The poets very well understood this, when they put all Greece and Asia to fire and sword for an apple. Inquire why that man hazards his life and honour upon the fortune of his rapier and dagger; let him acquaint you with the occasion of the quarrel; he cannot do it without blushing, 'tis so idle and frivolous!

The necessity of deliberation before we engage in affairs, especially quarrels.

A little thing will engage you in't, but being once embarked, all cords draw; greater considerations are then required, more hard and more important. How much easier is it not to enter in, than it is to get out? We should proceed contrary to the

[1] See the *Mem. of Philip de Comines*, v. 1.

[2] Referring to the civil war between Marius and Sylla. See Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, c. 3.

reed, which at its first spring, produces a long and straight shoot, but afterwards, as if tired and out of breath, runs into thick and frequent joints and knots, as so many pauses, which demonstrate that it has no more its first vigour and constancy; 'twere better to begin fair and calmly, and to keep a man's breath and vigour for the height and stress of the business. We guide and govern affairs in their beginnings, and have them then in our own power; but afterwards, when they are once at work, 'tis they that guide and govern us, and we have to follow them.

Yet do I not pretend by this to say that this plan has relieved me of all difficulty, and that I have not often had enough to do to curb and restrain my passions; they are not always to be governed according to the measure of occasions, and often have their entries very sharp and violent. Yet good fruit and profit may thence be reaped, except by those who in well-doing are not satisfied with any benefit, if reputation be wanting; for, in truth, such an effect is of no account, but by every one in himself; you are better contented, but not more esteemed, seeing you reformed yourself before you came into play, or that any vice was discovered in you. Yet not in this only, but in all other duties of life also, the way of those who aim at honour is very different from that they proceed by, who propose to themselves order and reason. I find some who rashly and furiously rush into the lists, and cool in the race. As Plutarch says,[1] that as those who, through awkwardness, are soft and facile to grant whatever is desired of them, are afterwards as frail to break their word and to recant; so likewise he who enters lightly into a quarrel, is subject to run as lightly out of it. The same difficulty that keeps me from entering into it would, when once hot and engaged in it, incite me to maintain it with resolution. 'Tis, perhaps, wrong; but when a man is once engaged, he must go through with it or die. "Undertake coldly," said Bias,[2] "but pursue with ardour." For want of prudence,

[1] *On False Shame.*

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

men fall into want of courage, which is still more intolerable.

Most accommodations of our quarrels nowadays are discreditable and false; we only seek to save appearances, and in the mean time betray and disavow our true intentions; we salve over the fact. We know very well how we said the thing, and in what sense we spoke it, and all the company, and all our friends with whom we would appear to have the advantage, understand it well enough too; 'tis at the expense of our frankness, and the honour of our courage, that we disown our thoughts, and seek subterfuge in falsehood to make friends; we give ourselves the lie, to excuse the lie we have given another. You are not to consider whether your word or action may admit of another interpretation; 'tis your own real and sincere interpretation, your real meaning, that you are thenceforward to maintain, whatever it cost you. Men address themselves to your virtue and your conscience, which are neither of them to be disguised; let us leave these pitiful ways and expedients to the tricksters of the law. The excuses and satisfactions that I see every day made and given to repair indiscretion, seem to me more scandalous than the indiscretion itself. It were better to affront your adversary a second time, than to offend yourself by giving him such satisfaction. You have braved him in your heat and anger, and you go to appease him in your cooler and better sense; and by that means, lay yourself lower, and at his feet, whom before you pretended to overtop. I do not find anything a gentleman can say so rude and vicious in him, as unsaying what he has said is infamous, when that unsaying is authoritatively extracted from him; forasmuch as obstinacy is more excusable in him than pusillanimity. Passions are as easy for me to evade, as they are hard for me to moderate: *Exscinduntur facilius animo quam temperantur.* "'Tis easier to tear them altogether from the mind, than to moderate them." He who cannot attain unto that noble stoical impassibility, let him secure himself in the bosom of this popular stupidity of

mine; what those great souls performed by their virtue, I inure myself to do by complexion. The middle region harbours storms and tempests; the two extremes of philosophers and rustics concur in tranquillity and happiness:—

> Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,
> Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum
> Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari!
> Fortunatus et ille, deos qui novit agrestes,
> Panaque, Silvanumque senem, Nymphasque sorores! [1]

> "How blest the sage! whose mind can pierce each cause
> Of changeful nature, and her wond'rous laws;
> Who tramples fear beneath his foot, and braves
> Fate, and stern death, and hell's resounding waves!
> Blest too, who knows each god that guards the swain,
> Pan, old Sylvanus, and the Dryad train."

The birth of all things is weak and tender; and therefore we are to have an eye to beginnings; for as then, in their infancy, the danger is not perceived, so, when it is grown up, neither is the remedy to be found. I had every day encountered a million of crosses, harder to digest, in the progress of ambition, than it has been difficult for me to curb the natural propension that inclined me to it:—

> Jure per horrui
> Late conspicuum tollere verticem.[2]

> "For well might I be shy,
> To raise my head so high."

All public actions are subject to various and uncertain interpretations, for too many heads judge of them. Some say of this city employment of mine [3] (and I am willing to say a word of it, not that it is worth so much, but to exhibit my conduct in such things), that I have behaved myself in it like a man not easy to be moved, and with a languishing affection; and they have some colour for what they say. I endeavour to keep my mind and my thoughts in repose: *Cum semper naturâ, tum etiam ætate jam quietus;* [4] "As being always quiet by nature, so also

Montaigne's account of his conduct in office.

[1] Virgil, *Georgic.* ii. 490.
[2] Horace, *Od.* iii. 16, 18.
[3] His mayoralty of Bordeaux.
[4] Cicero, *de Petit. Consul.* c. 2.

now by age;" and if they sometimes lash out on some rude and sensible impression, 'tis, in truth, without my advice. Yet, from this natural heaviness of mine, men ought not to conclude a total inability in me (for want of care and want of sense are two very different things), and much less any ingratitude towards that city, who employed the utmost means they had in their power to oblige me, both before they knew me and after, and did much more for me in choosing me anew, than conferring that honour upon me at first. I wish them all the good that can befall them, and certainly, had occasion offered, there is nothing I would have spared for their service. I did for them as I would have done for myself. 'Tis a good, warlike, and generous people, but capable of obedience and discipline, and of whom the best use may be made, if well guided. They say also that my administration was passed over without mark or thing worthy of record. Very good! They accuse my cessation in a time when everybody almost was convicted of doing too much. I am impatient to be doing where my will spurs me on; but this point is an enemy to perseverance. Let whoever will make use of me according to my own way, employ me in affairs where vigour and liberty are required; where a direct, short, and moreover a hazardous conduct is necessary; I may do something; but if it must be long, subtle, laborious, artificial, and intricate, they would do better to call in somebody else. All important offices are not hard; I came prepared to work a little more, had there been great occasion; for it is in my power to do something more than I do, or than I love to do; I did not to my knowledge omit anything that my duty really required. I easily forget those offices that ambition mixes with duty, and shelters under that title; these are they that, for the most part, fill the eyes and ears, and give men the most satisfaction; not the thing, but the appearance contents them; they think men sleep, if they hear no noise. My humour is no friend to tumult; I could appease a riot without emotion, and chastise a disorder without alteration. If I stand in

need of anger and inflammation, I borrow it and put it on; my manners are heavy, rather faint than sharp. I do not condemn a magistrate that sleeps, provided the people under his charge sleep as well as he; the laws in that case sleep too. For my part I commend a gliding, quiet, and silent life, *Neque submissam et abjectam, neque se efferentem;*[1] "Neither abject nor overbearing;" my fortune will have it so. I am descended from a family that has lived without lustre or tumult, and time out of mind, particularly ambitious of the character of truth and honesty.

Our people nowadays are so bred up to bustle and ostentation, that goodness, moderation, equability, and such quiet and obscure qualities, are no more regarded; rough bodies make themselves felt, the smooth are imperceptibly handled; sickness is felt; health little, or not at all; no more than the oils that foment us, in comparison of the pain for which we are fomented. 'Tis acting for a man's reputation and particular profit, not for the public good, to refer that to be done in the public place which a man may as well do in the council chamber, and to noon day what might have been done the night before; and to be jealous to do that himself which his colleague can do as well as he. So some surgeons of Greece used to perform their operations upon scaffolds, in the sight of the people, to draw more practice and profit. They think that good orders cannot be understood but by the sound of trumpet. Ambition is not a vice of little people, and of so mean abilities as ours. One said to Alexander: "Your father will leave you a great dominion, easy and pacific;" but this youth was envious of his father's victories, and the justice of his government, and would not have enjoyed the empire of the world in ease and peace.[2] Alcibiades, in Plato, had rather die young, beautiful, rich, noble, and learned, and all this *par excellence*, than stop in the state of such a condition;[3] this disease is perhaps excusable in so strong and so

[1] Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 34.
[2] See Plutarch, *Life of Alexander.*
[3] See the first *Alcibiades*

full a soul. When these wretched and dwarfish little souls gull and deceive themselves, and think to spread their fame, for having given right judgment in some affair, or kept up the discipline of the guard of the city gate, the more they think to exalt their heads, the more they show their tails. This little well-doing has neither body nor life; it vanishes in the first mouth, and goes no farther than from one street to another. Talk of it, in God's name, to your son or your servant; like that old fellow who, having no other auditor of his praises, nor approver of his valour, boasted to his chambermaid, crying out: "O, Peretta, what a brave man hast thou to thy master!" At the worst, talk of it to yourself; like a counsellor of my acquaintance, who, having disgorged a whole cart-load of paragraphs with great heat, and as great folly, coming out of the council chamber to make water, was heard very conscientiously to mutter betwixt his teeth: *Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.*[1] He who can get it of nobody else, let him pay himself out of his own purse.

Fame is not prostituted at so cheap a rate; rare and exemplary actions, to which it is due, would not endure the company of this prodigious crowd of little every-day performances. Marble may exalt your titles as much as you please, for having repaired a rod of a ruinous wall, or cleansed a public sewer, but not men of sense. Renown does not follow all good deeds, if novelty and difficulty be not conjoined; nay, so much as mere estimation, according to the Stoics, is not due to every action that proceeds from virtue; neither will they allow him bare thanks who, out of temperance, forbears to meddle with any old blear-eyed hag. Such as have known the admirable qualities of Scipio Africanus deny him the glory that Panætius attributes to him, of being abstinent from gifts, as a glory not so much his as that of the age he lived in.[2] We have pleasures suitable to our fortunes; let us not

[1] "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name, be the glory."—*Psalm* 113.

[2] Cicero, *de Offic.* ii. 22.

usurp those of grandeur. Our own are more natural, and by so much more solid and sure, as they are more low. If not for that of conscience, yet at least for ambition's sake, let us reject ambition; let us disdain that thirst of honour and renown, so low and mendicant, that it makes us beg it of all sorts of people (*quæ est ista laus, quæ possit e macello peti?*[1] "What praise is that which is to be got in the market?"), by abject means, and at what cheap rate soever. 'Tis dishonour to be so honoured. Let us learn to be no more greedy of honour than we are capable of it. To be puffed up with every action that is innocent, or of use, is only for such with whom such things are extraordinary and rare; they will value it as it costs them. How much the more a good effect makes a noise, so much I abate of the goodness of it, as I enter into suspicion that it was more performed for noise than upon the account of goodness; being exposed upon the stall, it is half sold. Those actions have much more grace and lustre that slip from the hand of him that does them negligently and without noise, and that some honest man after chooses out and raises from the shade, to produce it to the light upon its own account: *Mihi quidem laudabiliora videntur omnia, quæ sine venditatione, et sine populo teste fiunt,*[2] "All things, truly, seem more laudable to me that are performed without ostentation and without the testimony of the people," says the most vainglorious man in the world.

I had no care but to conserve and to continue, which are silent and insensible effects. Innovation is of great lustre, but 'tis interdicted in this time, when we are pressed upon, and have nothing to defend ourselves from but novelties. To forbear doing is often as noble as to do; but 'tis less in the light; and the little good I have in me is almost all of this kind. In fine, occasions in this employment of mine have been confederate with my humour, and I thank them for it. Is there any one who desires to be sick that he may see his physician at work? And would not that physician deserve

[1] Cicero, *de Fin.* ii. 15. [2] Id. *Tusc. Quæs.* ii. 26.

to be whipped who should wish the plague amongst us, that he might put his art in practice? I have never been of that wicked, though common enough, humour, to desire that the trouble and disorders of this city should elevate and honour my government; I have ever willingly contributed all I could to their tranquillity and ease. He who will not thank me for the order, gentle and silent calm, that has accompanied my administration, cannot, however, deprive me of the share that belongs to me by the title of my good fortune. And I am of such a composition that I would as willingly be happy as wise; and had rather owe my successes purely to the favour of Almighty God than to any industry or operation of my own. I had sufficiently published to the world my unfitness for such public offices. But I have something in me yet worse than incapacity, which is that I am not much displeased at it, and that I do not much go about to cure it, considering the course of life that I have proposed to myself. Neither have I satisfied myself in this employment, but I have very near arrived at what I expected from myself, and have much surpassed what I promised them with whom I had to do; for I am apt to promise something less than what I am able to do, and than what I hope to make good. I am sure that I have left no impressions of offence or hatred behind me; and as to leaving regret or desire of me amongst them, I at least know very well that I never much affected it:—

> Mene huic confidere monstro!
> Mene salis placidi vultum, fluctusque quietos
> Ignorare![1]

> "Wouldst thou I should a quiet sea believe,
> To this inconstant monster credit give?"

[1] *Æneid*, v. 849.

CHAPTER XI.

OF CRIPPLES.

'Tis now two or three years ago that they made the year ten days shorter in France. How many changes may we expect should follow this reformation! This was properly moving heaven and earth at once. And yet nothing for all that stirs from its place; my neighbours still find their seasons of sowing and reaping, the opportunities of doing their business, the hurtful and propitious days, just at the same time where they had, time out of mind, assigned them. There was no more error perceived in our old custom, than there is amendment found in this alteration. So great an uncertainty there is throughout; so gross, obscure, and dull is our perception. 'Tis said that this regulation might have been carried out with less inconvenience by subtracting, after the example of Augustus, the bissextile, which is in some sort a day of hindrance and confusion, till we had exactly satisfied the debt;[1] which, after all, is not paid by the correction, and we yet remain some days in arrear; and, by the same means, order might be taken for the future, providing that after the revolution of such a year, or such a number of years, the supernumerary day should be always thrown out, so that we could not henceforward err above four and twenty hours in our computation. We have no other account of time but years; the world has for many ages made use of that only, and yet it is a measure that to this day we are not agreed upon; such a one, that we

The year cut ten days shorter.

[1] Pope Gregory XIII. having remarked that the error of eleven minutes, which occurred in the Julian year, had given the world ten days more than it was entitled to, paid off the debt to time by at once cutting out ten days from the year 1582, proceeding at once from the 5th to the 15th of October in that year. The new mode of reckoning years is called, after his holiness, the Gregorian calendar, or New Style, while the Julian calendar is termed Old Style, which latter is still followed by the Russians and other members of the Greek Church.

still doubt what form other nations have variously given to it, and what was the true use of it. What do some say? "That the heavens, in growing old, bow themselves down nearer towards us, and put us to an uncertainty even of days and months." And what does Plutarch say?[1] "That astrology had not, in his time, determined the motion of the moon." See what a fine condition are we in to keep records of things past!

The vanity of the human understanding, which often seeks for the causes of a fact, before there is a certainty of such fact.

I was just now ruminating, as I often do, upon this; what a free and roving thing human judgment is. I ordinarily see that men, in things proposed to them, more willingly study to find out the reason than to find out the truth of them; they slip over presuppositions, but are curious in examination of consequences; they leave the things, and fly to the causes. Pleasant praters! the knowledge of causes only concerns him who has the conduct of things, not us, who are only to undergo them, and who have the perfectly full and accomplished use of them, according to our need, without penetrating into their origin and essence; wine is none the more pleasant to him that knows its first faculties. On the contrary, both the body and soul alter and interrupt the right they have of the use of the world and of themselves, by mixing with it the opinion of learning. Effects concern us, but the means not at all. To determine and to distribute appertain to superiority and command, as it does to subjection to accept. Let me reprehend our custom; we commonly begin thus: "How is such a thing done?" whereas, we should say: "Is such a thing done?" Our reason is able to create a hundred other worlds, and to find out the beginnings and contexture; it needs neither matter nor foundation. Let it run on; it builds as well in the air as on the earth; and with inanity as well as with matter:—

Dare pondus idonea fumo.[2]

"And can give weight to smoke."

[1] *Roman Questions*, c. 24. [2] Persius, v. 20.

I find that almost throughout we should say: "There is no such thing;" and should myself often make use of this answer, but I dare not; for they cry: "It is a defect produced from ignorance and weakness of understanding;" and I am forced, for the most part, to juggle for company, and prate of frivolous and idle subjects, which I don't believe a single word of. Besides that, in truth, 'tis a little rude and quarrelsome, flatly to deny a proposition; and few people but will affirm, especially in things hard to be believed, that they have seen them, or at least will name witnesses whose authority will stop our mouths from contradiction. By this mode we know the foundations and means of things that never were; and the world scuffles about a thousand questions, of which the *pro* and *con* are both false: *Ita finitima sunt falsa veris . . . . . ut in præcipitem locum non debeat se sapiens committere.*[1] "False things are so like the true, that a wise man should not trust himself upon the precipice."

Truth and lies are faced alike; their port, taste, and proceedings are the same. We look upon them with the same eye. I hold that we are not only remiss in defending ourselves from deceit, but that we seek and offer ourselves to be gulled. We love to entangle ourselves in vanity, as a thing conformable to our being.

What credit false miracles have gained in the world.

I have seen the birth of several miracles of my time. Although they died in the birth, yet have we not failed to foresee what they would have come to, had they lived their full age; for 'tis but finding the end of the clue, and one may wind off as much as one will; and there is a greater distance betwixt nothing and the least thing in the world, than there is betwixt that and the greatest. Now, the first that are imbued with this beginning of novelty, when they set out and sow their history, find, by the oppositions they meet with, where the difficulty of persuasion lies, and so caulk that place with some false piece.[2]

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 21.

[2] "Que d'erreurs monstreuses accré-

Besides that, *insita hominibus libidine alendi de industria rumores*,[1] "men having a natural desire to nourish reports," we naturally make a conscience of restoring what has been lent us, without some usury and access of our substance. Particular error first makes the public error; and afterwards, in turn, the public error makes the particular error.[2] Thus all this vast fabric goes on founding and confounding itself from hand to hand, so that the remotest testimony is better instructed than those that are nearest, and the last informed better than the first. 'Tis a natural progress; for whoever believes anything, thinks it a work of charity to persuade another into the same opinion, which the better to do, he will make no difficulty of adding as much of his own invention as he conceives necessary to encounter the resistance or want of conception he meets with in others. I myself, who make a great conscience of lying, and am not very solicitous of giving credit and authority to what I say, do yet find that, in the arguments I have in hand, being heated with opposition of another, or by the proper heat of my own narration, I swell and puff up my subject by voice, motion, vigour, and force of words, and, moreover, by extension and amplification, not without some prejudice to the naked truth; but I do it conditionally withal, that to the first who brings me to myself, and who asks me the plain truth, I presently surrender my effort, and deliver it to him without exaggeration, without emphasis, or any larding of my own. A quick and earnest way of speaking, as mine is, is apt to run into hyperbole. There is nothing upon which men commonly are more intent than to make way for their own opinions. Where

ditées par la science, même qui aurait dû les détruire! On commence par une fausse charte, par un diplôme supposé; on le montre en secret à quelques personnes interessées à le faire valoir; sa réputation s'établit avant même qu'il soit connu. Commence-t-il à percer; les honnêtes gens, les esprits sensés se recrient contre l'imposture: on les fait taire; on rectifie une erreur, on déguise habilement un mensonge; on corrompt le sens du texte par des commentaires. Ecoutons Montaigne, il dira mieux que moi: 'Les premiers qui sont abbruvés de ce commencement d'estrangeté,' &c. Qui veut apprendre à douter doit lire ce chapitre entier de Montaigne, le moins méthodique de philosophes, mais le plus sage et le plus aimable." Voltaire, *Mélanges Historiques*.

[1] Livy, xxviii. 24.

[2] "Et quum singulorum error publicum fecerit, singulorum errorem facit publicus." Seneca, *Epist.* 81.

the ordinary means fail us, we add command and force, fire and sword. 'Tis sad work to be at that pass, that the best trial of truth must be the multitude of believers, in a crowd where the number of fools so much exceeds that of the wise: *Quasi vero quidquam sit tam valde, quam nil sapere, vulgare.*[1] *Sanitatis patrocinium est insanientium turba.*[2] "As if anything were so common as ignorance. The multitude of fools is a protection to the wise." 'Tis hard to resolve a man's judgment against the common opinions. The first persuasion, taken from the subject itself, possesses the simple; and from them diffuses itself to the wise, under the authority of the number and antiquity of witnesses. For my part, what I should not believe from one, I should not believe from a hundred and one; and do not judge opinions by the years.

A priest that cured all sorts of diseases by words and gestures

'Tis not long since one of our princes, in whom the gout had spoiled an excellent nature and sprightly disposition, suffered himself to be so far persuaded with the report that was made of the wonderful operations of a certain priest, who, by words and gestures, cured all sorts of diseases, as to go a long journey to seek him out; and by the force of his apprehension, for some hours so persuaded and laid his legs asleep, as to obtain that service from them they had a long time forgotten. Had fortune heaped five or six such like adventures, it had been enough to have brought this miracle into nature. There was afterwards discovered so much simplicity and so little art in the architect of such operations, that he was thought too contemptible to be punished. As would be thought of most such things, were they well examined: *Miramur ex intervallo fallentia:*[3] "We admire at distant things that deceive." So does our sight often represent to us strange images at distance, that vanish as we approach near: *Nunquam ad liquidum fama perducitur.*[4] "Fame is never brought to be clear."

'Tis wonderful from how idle beginnings, and frivolous

1 Cicero, *de Divinat.* ii. 39.
2 St. Augustin, *de Civit. Dei*, vi. 10.
3 Seneca, *Epist.* 118.
4 Quint. Curt. ix. 2.

causes, such famous impressions commonly proceed! This it is that obstructs the information; for whilst we seek out the causes, and the great and weighty ends worthy of so great a name, we lose the true one; they escape our sight by their littleness; and, in truth, a prudent, diligent, and subtle inquisition, indifferent and not prepossessed, is required in such searches. To this very hour all these miracles and strange events have concealed themselves from me. I have never seen a greater monster or miracle in the world than myself. A man grows familiar with all strange things by time and custom; but the more I frequent and the better I know myself, the more does my own deformity astonish me, and the less I understand myself.

What Montaigne thought the clearest of miracles.

The principal right of advancing and producing such accidents is reserved to fortune. Riding the day before yesterday through a village, about two leagues from my house, I found the place yet hot with a miracle which had lately exploded there, wherewith the neighbourhood had been several months amused, so that the neighbouring provinces had begun to take up the excitement, and to run thither in great companies of all sorts of people. A young fellow of the town had one night counterfeited the voice of a spirit in his own house, without any other design at present, but only for sport; but this having succeeded with him a little better than he expected, to illustrate his farce with more actors, he took a stupid, silly country girl into the scene, and at last there were three of the same age and understanding; and from domestic lectures, proceeded to public preaching, hiding themselves under the altar of the church, never speaking but by night, and forbidding any light to be brought. From words which tended to the conversion of the world, and threatened the day of judgment (for these are subjects under the authority and reverence of which imposture most securely lurks), they proceeded to some visions and movements so simple and ridiculous, that nothing could hardly be so gross and contemptible

amongst little children. Yet had fortune never so little favoured the design, who knows to what height this juggling might have at last arrived? These poor devils are at present in prison, and are like to pay for the common folly, and I know not whether some judge may not make them smart for his share in it. We see clearly through this, which is discovered; but in many things of the like nature, that exceed our knowledge, I am of opinion that we ought to suspend our judgment, both as to rejecting, and as to receiving.

The foundation of all imposture.

Many abuses in the world are begotten, or, to speak more boldly, all the abuses of the world are begotten, by our being afraid of acknowledging our ignorance, and that we hold ourselves bound to accept all things we are not able to refute; we speak of all things by precepts and resolution. The style at Rome was, that even that which a witness deposed to have seen with his own eyes, and that which a judge determined on his most certain knowledge, was couched in this form of speaking: "It seems to me."[1] They make me hate things that are likely, when they would impose them upon me for infallible; I love these words which mollify and moderate the temerity of our propositions: "Perhaps, in some sort, 'tis said, I think," and the like; and had I had to train up children, I had so put this way of answering into their mouths, inquiring, and not resolutive: "What does this mean? I understand it not; it may be; is it true?" that they should rather have retained the form of pupils at threescore years old, than to go out doctors, as they now do, at ten. He who would cure ignorance, must confess it.

Iris is the daughter of Thaumantis;[2] wonder is the foundation of all philosophy; inquiry the progress; ignorance the end. Ay, but there is a sort of ignorance, strong and generous, that yields nothing in honour and courage to knowl-

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 47.

[2] That is to say of wonder (θαῦμα θαυματος). "Est enim pulcher (the rainbow, *Iris*) et ob eam causam, quia speciem habet *admirabilem*, *Thaumante* dicitur esse natus." Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* iii. 20. Readers will see that in the text of Montaigne they must read *Thaumas*, not *Thaumante*

edge; a knowledge which to conceive requires no less knowledge than knowledge itself. I saw in my younger days a report of a process that Corras,[1] a counsellor of Thoulouse, put in print, of a strange accident of two men, who presented themselves the one for the other. I remember (and I hardly remember anything else), that he seemed to have rendered the imposture of him whom he judged to be guilty so wonderful, and so far exceeding both our knowledge and his who was the judge, that I thought it a very bold sentence that condemned him to be hanged. Let us take up some form of arrest that shall say: "The court understands nothing of the matter;" more freely and ingenuously than the Areopagites did, who, finding themselves perplexed with a cause they could not unravel, ordered the parties to appear again in a hundred years.[2]

As to witches.

The witches of my neighbourhood run a hazard of their lives, upon the formation of every new author that will give a body to their dreams. To accommodate the examples that holy writ gives us of such things, most certain and irrefragable examples, and to tie them to our modern events, being we neither see the causes nor the means, will require another sort of wit than ours. It perhaps only belongs to that sole all-powerful testimony to tell us: "This is, and that is, and not that other." God ought to be believed; that certainly is good reason; but not one amongst us, who is astonished at his own narration (and he must of necessity be astonished, if he be not out of his wits), whether he employ it about other men's affairs, or against himself.

I am plain and dull, and stick to the main point, and that

[1] Or rather Coras, a learned jurisconsult, born at Toulouse, 1513, and assassinated at the same place, with three other Protestants, on the 4th October, 1572, shortly after the St. Bartholomew. His works were published, in two volumes, folio, at Lyons, 1556, 1558, and afterwards reprinted at Wittemberg, 1603; and his life was written in Latin by James Coras, the poet, a member of the same family. The trial of which Montaigne speaks is the celebrated affair of the false Martin Guerre, of which Coras published the account referred to, Paris, 1565.

[2] Val. Max. viii. 1. Aulus Gellius, xii 7.

which is likely, avoiding those ancient reproaches: *Majorem fidem homines adhibent eis quæ non intelligunt.—Cupidine humani ingenii, libentius obscura creduntur.*[1] "Men are most apt to believe what they least understand. Through the lust of human wit, obscure things are more easily credited." I see very well that men are angry, and forbid me to doubt upon pain of insults and injuries; a new way of persuading! Mercy, for God's sake; I am not to be cuffed into belief. Let them be angry with those that accuse their opinion of falsity; I only accuse it of difficulty and boldness, and condemn the opposite affirmation equally with them, if not so imperiously. Who will establish his argument by overbearing and huffing, discovers his reason to be weak. For a verbal and scholastic altercation, let them have as much appearance as their contradictors: *Videantur sane, non affirmentur modo;*[2] "Let them suggest things as probable, but not affirm them;" but in the real consequence they draw from it, these have much the advantage. To kill men, a clear and shining light is required; and our life is too real and essential to warrant these supernatural and fantastic accidents.

As to drugs and poisons, I throw them out of my account; they are homicides, and of the worst sort; yet even in this, 'tis said, that we are not always to rely even upon the confessions of these people themselves; for they have sometimes been known to accuse themselves of the murder of persons who have afterwards been found living and well. In these other extravagant accusations, I should be apt to say that it is sufficient for a man, what recommendation soever he may have, to be believed in human things; but of what is beyond his conception and of supernatural effect, he ought then only to be believed when authorized by a supernatural approbation. The privilege it has pleased God to give to some of our witnesses, ought not to be lightly communicated and made cheap. I have my ears battered with a thousand such

[1] The second of these paragraphs is from Tacitus, *Hist.* i. 22. I know not whence Montaigne borrowed the other. [2] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 27.

flim-flams as these: "Three saw him such a day in the east, three the next day in the west; at such an hour, in such a place, in such a habit;" in truth, I should not believe myself. How much more natural and likely do I find it that two men should lie, than that one man, in twelve hours' time, should fly with the wind from east to west! How much more natural, that our understanding should be carried from its place, by the volubility of our disordered minds, than that one of us should be carried by a strange spirit upon a broomstick, flesh and bones as we are, up the funnel of a chimney! Let us not seek illusions from without and unknown, who are perpetually agitated with illusions domestic, and our own. Methinks a man is pardonable in disbelieving a miracle, as much at least as he can divert and elude the verification of it by ways other than marvellous; and I am of St. Augustin's opinion, "that 'tis better to lean towards doubt than assurance, in things hard to prove and dangerous to believe."

'Tis now some years ago that I travelled through the territories of a foreign prince, who, in my favour, and to abate my incredulity, did me the honour to let me see in his own presence and in private, ten or twelve prisoners of this kind; and amongst others an old hag, a real witch in foulness and deformity, who long had been famous in that profession. I saw both proofs and free confessions, and I know not what insensible mark upon the miserable creature; I examined and talked with her, and the rest, as much and as long as I would, and made the best and soundest observations I could, and I am not a man to suffer my judgment to be captivated by prepossession; and, in the end, should in conscience sooner have prescribed them hellebore than hemlock: *Captisque res magis mentibus, quam consceleratis, similis visâ*:[1] "The thing was rather to be attributed to madness than malice;" justice has correction proper for such maladies. As to the oppositions and arguments that honest men have made me, both there, and often in other places, I have met with none that

[1] Livy, viii. 18.

have convinced me, and that have not admitted a more likely solution than their conclusions. It is true, indeed, that the proofs and reasons that are founded upon experience and matter of fact, I do not go about to untie; neither have they any end; I often cut them, as Alexander did the gordian knot. After all, 'tis setting a man's conjectures at a very high price, to cause a man to be roasted alive upon them.

We are told by several examples (and particularly Prestantius of his father [1]), that being more profoundly asleep than men usually are, he fancied himself to be a mare, and that he served the soldiers for a sumpter; and what he fancied himself to be, he was.[2] If sorcerers dream so materially, if dreams can sometimes so incorporate themselves with effects of life, I cannot believe that therefore our will should be accountable to justice; which I say, as a man, who am neither judge nor privy councillor, nor think myself by many degrees worthy so to be, but a man of the common sort, born and vowed to the obedience of the public realm, both in words and acts. He that should record my idle talk, to the prejudice of the most paltry law, opinion, or custom of his parish, would do himself a great deal of wrong, and me too; for in what I say, I warrant no other certainty but that 'tis what I had then in my thought, a thought tumultuous and wavering. All I say is by way of discourse: *Nec me pudet ut istos, fateri nescire quod nesciam:* [3] "Neither am I ashamed, as they are, to confess my ignorance of what I do not know:" I should not speak so boldly if it were my due to be believed; and so I told a great man, who complained to me of the tartness and contention of my advice. Perceiving you to be ready and prepared on one part, I pro-

1 St. Augustin, *De Civit. Dei*, xviii. 18. The holy father opines, that "in cases of this sort the devil presents to the spectators a visionary body which they take for a real animal, a horse, an ass, &c., and that the man who imagines himself to be that ass, or that horse, thinks he carries a real burden, as much as it was possible for him to fancy it in a dream; so that if such phantom of an animal carries real bodies, they are the demons who carry them in order to deceive men, who then see real bodies on the back of a sumpter-horse, which is a mere phantom."

2 "Quod ita, ut narravirt, factum fuisse compertum est."—St. Aug. *ut supra.*

3 Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 25.

pose to you the other, with all the care I can to clear your judgment, not to enforce it. God has your hearts in his hand, and will furnish you with choice. I am not so presumptuous as to desire that my opinions should so much as give an inclination in a thing of so great importance; my fortune has not trained them up to so potent and elevated conclusions. Truly, I have not only a great many humours, but also a great many opinions, that I would endeavour to make my son dislike, if I had one. The truest are not always the most commodious to man; he is of too wild a composition.

Whether it be to the purpose or not, 'tis no great matter; 'tis a common proverb in Italy, that he knows not Venus in her perfect sweetness, who has never lain with a lame mistress. Fortune, or some particular accident, has long ago put this saying into the mouths of the people; and the same is said of the men as well as of women; for the queen of the Amazons answered the Scythian, who courted her to love, ἄριστα χωλὸς οἰφεῖ,[1] lame men perform best. In this feminal republic, to evade the dominion of the males, they lamed them in their infancy, arms, legs, and other members that gave them advantage over them, and only made use of men in that wherein we in the other parts of the world make use of women. I should be apt to think that the irregular movement of the lame mistress added some new pleasure to the work, and some extraordinary titillation to those who were at the sport; but I have lately learnt that ancient philosophy has itself determined it;[2] it says that the legs and thighs of lame women not receiving, by reason of their imperfection, their due aliment, it falls out that the genital parts above are fuller, and better supplied, and more vigorous; or else that this defect hindering exercise, they who are engaged in it less

Lame people best at the sport of Venus.

[1] Michael Apostolius, *Proverb. Centur.* 4, num. 43. It was doubtless this opinion that induced the ancients to assign the lame Vulcan as the husband of Venus.

[2] Aristotle, *Problem.* sect. 10, prob. 26.

disperse their strength, and come more entire to the sports of Venus; which also is the reason why the Greeks decried the women weavers, as being more hot than other women, by reason of their sedentary trade, which is carried on without any great exercise of the body. What is it we may not reason of at this rate? I might also say of these, that the jogging which their work causes while they are sitting, rouses and provokes their desire, as the swinging and motion of coaches does that of our ladies.

Women weavers more lustful than other women.

Do not these examples serve to make good what I said at first; that our reasons often anticipate the effect, and have so infinite an extent of jurisdiction, that they judge and exercise themselves, even in inanity and where there is no being? Besides, the flexibility of our invention to forge reasons for all sorts of dreams, our imagination is equally facile to receive impressions of falsity, by very frivolous appearances; for, by the sole authority of the ancient and common use of this proverb, I have formerly made myself believe that I had more pleasure with a woman, by reason she was not straight, and reckoned that deformity amongst her graces.

Torquato Tasso, in the comparison he makes between France and Italy,[1] says he has observed that our legs are generally smaller than those of the Italian gentlemen, and attributes the cause of it to our being continually on horseback; which is the very same from which Suetonius draws a quite different conclusion; for he says, on the contrary, that Germanicus had made his legs bigger by continuation of the same exercise.[2] There is nothing so supple and erratic as our understanding; 'tis like the shoe of Theramenes, fit for all feet;[3] 'tis double and various; and the matters are

The French gentlemen's legs smaller than those of the Italians, and why.

1 *Paragone dell' Italia alla Francia*, page 11. *Nella parte prima delle Rime e prose del Sign.* Torquat. Tasso, *in Ferrara, Ann.* 1585.

2 *Life of Caligula.*

3 Erasmus, Adagia, *in Verbo.*

double and diverse too. "Give me a drachm of silver," said a Cynic philosopher to Antigonus. "That is not a present befitting a king," replied he. "Give me then a talent," said the other. "That is not a present befitting a Cynic."[1]

> Seu plures calor ille vias et cæca relaxat
> Spiramenta, novas veniat qua succus in herbas:
> Seu durat magis, et venas astringit hiantes;
> Ne tenues pluviæ, rapidive potentia solis
> Acrior, aut Boreæ penetribile frigus adurat.[2]

> "Whether earth gain fresh strength or richer food,
> Or noxious moisture, forced by fire, exude;
> Whether it draw through many an opening vein,
> Juice to fresh plants that clothe anew the plain;
> Or brace the pores that, pervious to the day,
> Felt the prone sun's intolerable ray;
> To piercing showers th' expanded fissure close,
> And the chill north that blisters as it blows."

Ogni medaglia ha il suo reverso. "Every medal has its reverse." This is why Climotachus said of old, that Carneades had outdone the labours of Hercules, in having taken from man consent, that is to say, opinion and the temerity of judging.[3] This so strong fancy of Carneades, sprung, in my opinion, anciently from the impudence of those who made profession of knowledge, and their immeasurable self-conceit. Æsop was set for sale with two other slaves; the buyer asked the first what he could do; he, to enhance his own value, promised mountains and miracles, saying he could do this, and that, and I know not what; the second said as much of himself, and more; when it came to Æsop's turn, and that he was also asked what he could do: "Nothing," said he, "for these two have taken up all before me; they can do everything."[4] So has it happened in the school of philosophy; the pride of those who attributed the capacity of all things to human wit, created in others, out of spite and emulation, this opinion, that it is capable of nothing; the one maintain the same extreme in ignorance that the others

[1] Seneca, *de Benef.* ii. 17.
[2] Virgil, *Georgic.* i. 89.
[3] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 34.
[4] Planud. *in Vitâ.*

do in knowledge, in order to make it undeniable that man is immoderate throughout, and can give no other positive sentence but that of necessity, and the want of ability to proceed farther.

CHAPTER XII.

OF PHYSIOGNOMY.

We admire the discourses of Socrates out of pure respect to the public approbation, without discerning the true value of them

ALMOST all the opinions we have are derived from authority, and taken upon trust; and 'tis not amiss; we could not choose worse than by ourselves, in so weak an age. That image of the discourses of Socrates, which his friends have transmitted to us, we approve upon no other account but from the reverence to public approbation; 'tis not according to our own knowledge; they are not after our way; if anything of this kind should spring up now, few men would value them. We discern not the graces, otherwise than by certain features, touched up and illustrated by art; such as glide on in their own purity and simplicity easily escape so gross a sight as ours; they have a delicate and concealed beauty; there needs a clear and purified sight to discover so secret a light. Is not simplicity, according to our notions, cousin-german to folly, and a quality of reproach? Socrates makes his soul move a natural and common motion; a peasant said this, a woman said that; he never has anything in his mouth but carters, joiners, cobblers, and masons; these are deductions and similitudes drawn from the most common and known actions of men; every one understands them. Under so vile a form we should never have entertained the nobility and

splendour of his admirable conceptions; we who think all things low and flat that are not elevated by learning, and who discern no riches but in pomp and show. This world of ours is only formed for ostentation; men are only puffed up with wind, and are bandied to and fro like footballs. That man proposed to himself no vain and idle fancies; his design was to furnish us with precepts and things that really and more fitly serve to the use of life:—

> Servare modum, finemque tenere,
> Naturamque sequi.[1]

> "To keep a mean, his end still to observe,
> And from the laws of nature ne'er to swerve."

He was also always one and the same,[2] and raised himself, not by starts, but by complexion, to the highest pitch of vigour; or, to say it better, he exalted nothing, but rather brought down and reduced to his original, and natural condition, all asperities and difficulties; for, in Cato, 'tis most manifest that it is a proceeding extended far beyond the common ways; in the brave exploits of his life, and in his death, we find him always mounted upon the high horse; whereas this man[3] always creeps upon the ground, and with a slow and ordinary pace, treats of the most useful discourses, and bears himself, both at his death, and in the most thorny traverses that could present themselves, in the ordinary course of human life.

The character of Socrates.

It has fallen out well, that the man most worthy to be known, and to be presented to the world for example, should be he of whom we have the most certain knowledge; he has been made dear to us by the most clear-sighted men that ever were; the testimonies we have of him are admirable, both in fidelity and capacity. 'Tis a great thing that he was able so to order the pure imaginations of a child, that, without altering or wresting them, he has thereby produced the most beautiful effects of a

[1] Lucan, ii. 381, speaking of Cato.
[2] Cicero, *de Offic.* i. 26.
[3] *Socrates.*

human soul; he presents it neither elevated nor rich, he only represents it sound, but certainly with a pure and sprightly health. By these common and natural springs, by these ordinary and vulgar fancies, without being moved or making any bustle, he set up, not only the most regular but the most high and vigorous beliefs, actions, and manners that ever were. 'Tis he who brought back from heaven, where she was losing her time, human wisdom, to restore her to man, with whom her most just and greatest business lies.[1] See him plead before his judges; observe by what reasons he rouses his courage to the hazards of war; with what arguments he fortifies his patience against calumny, tyranny, death, and the shrewishness of his wife; you will find nothing in all this borrowed from the arts and sciences; the simplest may there discover their own means and power; 'tis not possible more to retire, or to creep more low. He has done human nature a great kindness in showing it how much it can do of itself.

We are all of us richer than we think for; but we are taught to borrow and to beg, and brought up more to make use of what is another's, than of our own. Man can in nothing fix and conform himself in his mere necessity; of pleasure, wealth, and power, he grasps at more than he can hold; his greediness is incapable of moderation. And I find that in curiosity of knowing he is the same; he cuts himself out more work than he can do, and more than he needs to do, extending the utility of knowledge as far as its matter: *Ut omnium rerum, sic litterarum quoque, intemperantia laboramus;*[2] "As of everything else, we are also afflicted with intemperance in letters;" and Tacitus has reason to commend the mother of Agricola for having restrained her son in his too violent appetite for learning.[3]

Man incapable of moderation.

'Tis a good, if duly considered, which has in it, as the other goods of men have, a great deal of vanity, and of proper and natural weakness, and that costs very dear. The acquisition of it is more haz-

Learning is a dangerous acquisition. That which is of absolute use is in us by nature.

[1] Cicero, *Acad.* i. 4. [2] Seneca, *Epist.* 106. [3] *Life of Agricola*, c. 4.

ardous than that of any other meat or drink; for in other things, what we have bought we carry home in some vessel, and there have liberty to examine our purchase, and consider when and how much of it we will take; but the sciences we can, at the very first, bestow into no other vessel than the soul; we swallow them as we buy them, and return from the market, either already infected or amended; there are some that only burden and overcharge the stomach instead of nourishing; and others that, under colour of curing, poison us. I have been pleased, in places where I have been, to see men, out of devotion, make a vow of ignorance as well as of chastity, poverty, and penitence; 'tis also a gelding of our unruly appetites to blunt this cupidity that spurs us on to the study of books, and to deprive the soul of this voluptuous complacency, that tickles us with the idea of knowledge; and 'tis plenarily to accomplish the vow of poverty to add unto it that of the mind. We need little learning to teach us how to live at our ease; and Socrates tells us that it is in us, with the way how to find it, and the manner how to use it. All this knowledge of ours that exceeds the natural is well-nigh superfluous and vain; 'tis much if it do not more burden and cumber us than it does us good: *Paucis opus est litteris ad mentem bonam:*[1] "A man of good natural parts has no great need of learning:" 'tis a feverish excess of the mind; a tempestuous and unquiet instrument. Collect yourself; you will find in yourself the arguments of nature against death true, and the most proper to serve you in time of need; 'tis they that make a peasant, an entire people, die with as much firmness as a philosopher. Should I have died less cheerfully before I had read Cicero's Tusculans? I believe not; and when I find myself at the best, I perceive that my tongue is enriched indeed, but my courage little or nothing elevated by them; it is just as nature forged it at first, and against any conflict only defends itself after a natural and ordinary way; books have not so much served me for instruc-

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 106.

tion as for exercise. What if knowledge, trying to arm us with new defences against natural inconveniences, has more imprinted in our fancies their weight and grandeur, than her reasons and subtleties to secure us from them? They are subtleties, indeed, with which she often alarms us to little purpose; do but observe how many slight and frivolous, and, if nearly examined, how many incorporeal arguments the closest and wisest authors scatter about a good one; they are no other but verbal quirks to gull us; but forasmuch as this may be with some profit, I will shift them no farther; many of that sort are here, dispersed up and down, either borrowed or imitated; yet ought a man to take heed not to call that force which is only a knack of writing, and that solid which is only quick, or that good which is only fine: *Quæ magis gustata quam potata delectant;*[1] "Which more delight in tasting than in being drunk;" everything that pleases does not nourish, *ubi non ingenii, sed animi negotium agitur.*[2] "Where the question is not about improving the wit, but bettering the understanding."

To see the work that Seneca makes to fortify himself against death; to see him sweat and pant to harden and encourage himself, and fight so long upon the perch, would have lessened his reputation with me, had he not very bravely maintained it to the last. His so ardent and frequent agitations discover that he was himself impetuous and ardent (*Magnus animus remissius loquitur, et securius . . . non est alius ingenio, alius animo color,*[3] "A great courage speaks more negligently, more securely . . . wit and courage wear one and the same livery;" he must be convicted at his own expense); and he does in some sort discover that he was hard pressed by his enemy. Plutarch's way, by how much it is more disdainful and negligent, is in my opinion so much the more manly and persuasive; I am apt to believe that his soul had more

A comparison between Seneca and Plutarch.

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 5.
[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 75.
[3] Id. *ib.* 114, 115.

assured and more regular motions. The one, more sharp, pricks and makes us start, and more touches the soul; the other more solid, who informs, establishes, and constantly supports us, more touches the understanding. That ravishes the judgment, this wins it. I have likewise seen other writings, yet more reverenced than these, that, in the representation of the conflict they maintain against the temptations of the flesh, paint them so sharp, so powerful, and invincible, that we, who are of the common sort of people, are apt as much to wonder at the strangeness and unknown force of their temptation, as at their resistance.

The resolution of the vulgar in facing the most fatal accidents of life, and even death itself, more instructive than the lectures of the philosophers.

To what end do we go arming ourselves with these efforts of science? Let us look down to the earth, upon the poor people that we see scattered about, prone and intent upon their business, that neither know Aristotle nor Cato, example nor precept; even from these does nature every day extract effects of constancy and patience, more pure and firm than those who so inquisitively study in the schools. How many do I ordinarily see who slight poverty? How many that desire to die, or that die without alarm or regret? He that is now digging in my garden has this morning buried his father, or his son. The very names by which they call diseases sweeten and mollify the sharpness of them; the phthisic is with them no more than a cough, the dysentery but a looseness, a pleurisy but a cold, and as they gently name them, so they lightly endure them; they are very great and grievous indeed when they hinder their ordinary labour, and they never keep their beds but to die: *Simplex illa et aperta virtus in obscuram et solertem scientiam versa est.*[1] "That plain and simple virtue is converted into an obscure and subtle knowledge."

Montaigne's account of the terrible calamities

I was writing this about the time when a great load of our intestine troubles for several months, lay with all its weight upon me; I had the enemy at my

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 95.

door on one side, and the freebooters, worse enemies than they, on the other: *Non armis, sed vitiis certatur;* "Fighting not with arms, but with vices;" and underwent all sorts of military injuries at once:—

of the civil war in which he was involved.

> Hostis adest dextra lævaque a parte timendus,
> Vicinoque malo terret utrumque latus.[1]
>
> "On either hand an enemy alarms,
> And threatens both sides with injurious arms."

A monstrous war! Other wars are bent against strangers, this against itself; and destroys itself with its own poison. 'Tis of so malignant and ruinous a nature, that it ruins itself with the rest; and with its own rage mangles and tears itself to pieces. We oftener see it dissolve of itself, than through scarcity of any necessaries, or by force of the enemy. All discipline evades it; it comes to compose sedition, and is itself full of it; will chastise disobedience, and itself is the example; and, employed for the defence of the laws, rebels against its own. What a condition are we in! Our physic makes us sick!

> Nostre mal s'empoisonne
> Du secours qu'on luy donne.
>
> Exsuperat magis, ægrescitque medendo.[2]
>
> "His physic makes him worse, and sicker still."
>
> Omnia fanda, nefanda, malo permista furore,
> Justificam nobis mentem avertere deorum.[3]
>
> "For right and wrong, confounded in this war,
> Have robb'd us of the gods' protecting care."

In the beginning of these popular maladies, a man may distinguish the sound from the sick; but when they come to continue, as ours have done, the whole body is then infected from head to foot, and no part is free from corruption; for there is no air that men so greedily draw in, that diffuses itself so soon, and that penetrates so deep, as that of license.

[1] Ovid, *de Ponto*, i. 3, 57.
[2] *Æneid*, xii. 46.
[3] Catullus, *de Nupt. Pelei et Thetidos*, verse 405.

Our armies only subsist, and are kept together by the cement of strangers; for of French there is now no constant and regular army to be made. Oh, shame! there is no more discipline now to be seen but in borrowed soldiers. As to ourselves, we conduct ourselves at the discretion, not of the chief, but every one at his own; the general has a harder game to play within than he has without; 'tis for the commander to follow the soldiers, to pay court to them, to consult their humours; he alone has to obey; all the rest is dissolute and free. It pleases me to observe how much pusillanimity and cowardice there is in ambition; by how abject and servile ways it must arrive at its end; but, withal, it displeases me to see good and generous natures, and that are capable of justice, every day corrupted in the management and command of this confusion. Long toleration begets habit; habit, consent and imitation. We had enough of ill-born souls, without spoiling those that were generous and good; so that if we go on, there will not remain any with whom to intrust the health of this state of ours, in case fortune chances to restore it:—

> Hunc saltem everso juvenem succurrere seclo
> Ne prohibite.[1]
>
> "O, let this youth a prostrate world sustain."

What is become of the old precept, that soldiers ought more to fear their chief than the enemy?[2] And that wonderful example, that an orchard being inclosed within the precincts of a camp of the Roman army, was seen at their dislodgment the next day, in the same condition, not an apple, though ripe and delicious, being pulled, but all left to the owner?[3] I could wish that our youth, instead of the time they spend in less fruitful travels and less honourable employments, would bestow one half of that time in being an eyewitness of naval exploits under some good captain-commander of Rhodes, and the other half in observing the discipline of the Turkish

[1] Virgil, *Georgic.* i. 500. Montaigne probably alludes to Henry of Navarre, afterwards Henry IV of France.

[2] Val. Maximus, ii. 7, *ext.* 2.

[3] Frontin. *Stratag.* iv. 3, 13, speaking of the army of M. Scaurus.

armies; for they have many differences and advantages over ours; one of which is, that our soldiers become more licentious in expeditions, theirs more temperate and circumspect; for the thefts and insolences committed upon the common people, which are only punished with a cudgel in peace, are capital in war; for an egg taken in Turkey without paying for it, fifty blows with a cudgel is the prefixed rate; for anything else, how trivial soever, not necessary to nourishment, they are presently impaled, or beheaded without mercy. I am astonished, in the history of Selim, the most cruel conqueror that ever was, to see that, when he subdued Egypt, the beautiful gardens about Damascus, though all open, and in a conquered land, and his army encamped upon the very place, should be left untouched by the hands of the soldiers, because they had not received the signal of plunder.

But is there any disease in a government so important as ought to be physicked with such a mortal drug? "No," says Favonius,[1] "not so much as the tyrannical usurpation of a commonwealth." Plato, likewise,[2] will not consent that a man should do violence to the peace of his country to cure it; and by no means approves of a reformation that disturbs and hazards all, and that is to be purchased at the price of the citizens' blood and ruin; determining it to be the duty of a patriot, in such a case, to let things alone; and only to pray to God for his extraordinary assistance; and he seems to be angry with his friend Dion for having proceeded something after another manner. I was a Platonist in this point, before I knew there had ever been such a man as Plato in the world. And if this person ought absolutely to be rejected from our society, he who, by the sincerity of his conscience, merited from the divine favour to penetrate so far into the Christian light, through the universal darkness wherein the world was involved in his time, I do not think it would well become us to suffer ourselves to be instructed by a heathen, how great

[1] Plutarch, *Life of Marcus Brutus*, c. 3. [2] *Epist. to Perdiccas*

an impiety it is not to expect from God any relief simply his own, and without our coöperation. I often doubt whether, among so many men as meddle in such affairs, there is not to be found some one of so weak understanding as to have been really persuaded that he went towards reformation by the worst of deformations; that he advanced towards his salvation by the most express causes that we have of most assured damnation; that by overthrowing the government, magistracy, and laws, in whose protection God had placed him, by tearing his mother to pieces, and giving the lacerated limbs to her old enemies to gloat over, by inspiring fraternal minds with parricidal animosities, by calling devils and furies to his aid, he can assist the holy sweetness and justice of the divine laws. Ambition, avarice, cruelty, and revenge, have not sufficient natural impetuosity of their own; let us bait them with the glorious titles of justice and devotion. There cannot a worse state of things be imagined than where wickedness comes to be legitimate, and assumes, with the magistrate's permission, the cloak of virtue: *Nihil in speciem fallacius quam prava religio ubi deorum numen prætenditur sceleribus.*[1] "Nothing has a more deceiving face than false religion, where devotion is pretended by wicked men." The extremest sort of injustice, according to Plato, is where that which is unjust is reputed just.[2]

The common people then suffered therein very much, not present damages only,

> Undique totis
> Usque adeo turbatur agris,[3]
>
> "So great disturbance reigns throughout the land,"

but future too; the living were to suffer, and so were they who were yet unborn; they pillaged them, and consequently me too, even of hope, taking from them all they had laid up in store to live on for many years:—

[1] Livy, xxxix. 16.
[2] *Republic*, ii. 4.
[3] Virgil, *Eclog.* i. 11

Quæ nequeunt secum ferre aut abducere, perdunt;
Et cremat insontes turba scelesta casas.[1]
Muris nulla fides, squalent populatibus agri.[2]

"What they can't bear away they spoil and spurn,
And the lewd rabble harmless houses burn;
Walls can't secure their masters, and the field,
Through woful waste, does an ill prospect yield."

Besides this shock, I suffered others; I underwent the inconveniences that moderation brings along with it in such diseases; I was curried on all hands; to the Ghibelline I was a Guelph; to the Guelph a Ghibelline; one of my poets expresses this very well, but I know not where it is. The situation of my house, and my friendliness to my neighbours, presented me with one face; my life and my actions with another. They did not lay formal accusations against me, for they had no hold. I never slink from the laws, and whoever would have questioned me, would have done himself a greater prejudice than me; they were only mute suspicions that were whispered about, which never want appearance in so confused a mixture, no more than envious or idle heads. I commonly assist the injurious presumptions that fortune scatters abroad against me, by a way I have ever had of evading to justify, excuse, or explain myself, conceiving that it were to compromise my conscience to plead in its behalf: *Perspicuitas enim augmentatione elevatur:*[3] "For perspicuity is clouded by augmentation." And, as if every one saw as clearly into me as I do myself, instead of retiring from an accusation, I step up to meet it, and rather give it some kind of colour by an ironical and scoffing confession, if I do not sit totally silent, as of a thing not worth my answer. But such as look upon this kind of behaviour of mine as too haughty a confidence, have as little kindness for me as they who interpret it the weakness of an indefensible cause; particularly great people, towards whom want of submission is the extreme fault, and who are rude to all justice that knows and feels itself, and is not sub-

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* iii. 10, 65.
[2] Claudian *in Eutrop.* i. 244.
[3] Cicero, *de Nat. Deor.* iii. 4.

missive, humble, and suppliant; I have often knocked my head against this pillar. So it is, that at what then befell me an ambitious man would have hanged himself, and a covetous one would have done the same. I have no manner of care of getting;

> Sit mihi quod nunc est etiam minus, et mihi vivam
> Quod superest ævi, si quid superesse volent di: [1]

> "This is my prayer: let me possess
> My present wealth, or even less;
> And if the bounteous gods should deign
> A longer life, that life be mine;"

but the losses that befell me by the injury of others, whether by theft or violence, go almost as near my heart, as they would do to that of the most avaricious man. The offence troubles me, without comparison, more than the loss. A thousand several sorts of mischiefs fell upon me in the neck of one another; I could better have borne them all at once.

How he bore his misfortune.

I had already begun considering to whom amongst my friends I might commit a necessitous and degraded old age; and having turned my eyes quite round, I found myself altogether at a loss. To let one's self fall plump down, and from so great a height, it ought to be in the arms of a solid, vigorous, and fortunate friendship; they are very rare, if there be any. At last I concluded that it was safest for me to trust to myself in my necessity; and if it should fall out that I should be put upon cold terms in fortune's favour, I should so much more recommend me to my own, and so much the closer attach me to myself. Men on all occasions throw themselves upon foreign help, to spare their own, which is the only certain and sufficient one, for him who knows how to arm himself therewith. Every one runs elsewhere, and to the future, forasmuch as no one is arrived at himself. And I was satisfied that they were profitable inconveniences, forasmuch as ill scholars are to be admonished with the rod, when reason will not do; as a crooked

[1] Horace, *Epist.* i. 18, 107.

piece of wood is by fire and straining to be reduced to straightness. I have a great while preached to myself to keep to myself, and separate myself from the affairs of others; yet I am still turning my eyes aside; a bow, a kind word, or look from a great person tempts me; of which God knows how little scarcity there is in these days, and how little they signify! I still, without wrinkling my forehead, hearken to the persuasions that are offered me to draw me into the market-place; and so gently refuse, as if I were half willing to be overcome. Now, to so indocile a spirit, blows are required; and this vessel which thus chops and cleaves, and is ready to fall in pieces, must have the hoops forced down with good sound strokes of a mallet. Secondly, that this accident served me for exercise to prepare for worse; if I, who, both by the benefit of fortune, and by the condition of my manners, hoped to be the last, should happen to be one of the first that should be trapped in this storm; instructing myself betimes to constrain my life, and fit it for a new condition. The true liberty is to be able to do what a man will with himself: *Potentissimus est qui se habet in potestate.*[1] "He is most potent, who has himself in his own power." In an ordinary and quiet time, a man prepares himself for moderate and common accidents; but, in the confusion wherein we have been for these thirty years, every Frenchman, whether in particular or in general, sees himself every hour upon the point of the total ruin and overthrow of his fortune; by so much the more ought he to have his courage furnished with stronger and more vigorous provision. Let us thank fortune, that has not made us live in an effeminate, idle, and languishing age; some, who could never have been so by other means, will be made famous by their misfortunes. As I seldom read in histories the confusions of other states, without regret that I was not present, the better to consider them, so does my curiosity make me in some sort please myself with seeing with my own eyes this notable spectacle of our public death, its form and

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 90.

symptoms; and, seeing I could not hinder it, am content to be destined to assist in it, and thereby to instruct myself. Thus do we greedily covet to see, though in shadow, and in the fables of theatres, the tragic representations of human fortune; 'tis not without compassion of what we hear, but we please ourselves in rousing our trouble, by the rarity of these pitiable events. Nothing tickles that does not pinch. And good historians skip over, as a stagnant water and dead sea, calm narrations, to be again upon the stories of wars and seditions, which they know are most acceptable to the reader.

I question whether or no I can handsomely confess with how insignificant a sacrifice of the repose and tranquillity of my life, I have passed over above the one half of it amid the ruin of my country. I am a little too liberal of patience, in accidents that do not directly affect me, and, in pitying myself, do not so much regard what they take from me, as what remains safe, both within and without. There is comfort in evading, one while one, another while another, of those evils that are levelled at me too at last, but at present hurt others only about us; as also that, in matters of public interest, the more my affection is universally dispersed, the weaker it is; to which may be added that it is half true, *tantum ex publicis malis sentimus, quantum ad privatas res pertinet;*[1] "we are only so far sensible of public evils, as they respect our private affairs;" and that the health from which we fell was such that itself lessens the regret we ought to have. It was health, but only in comparison of the sickness that has succeeded it; we are not fallen from any great height; corruption and thievery that is in dignity and office, seems to me the most insupportable; 'tis less annoying to be rifled in a wood than in a place of security. It was a universal junction of particular members, rotten in emulation of one another, and the most of them with inveterate ulcers, that neither required nor admitted of any cure.

This sinking, therefore, did rather animate than oppress

[1] Livy, xxx. 44.

me, by the assistance of my conscience, which was not only at peace within itself, but elevated, and I did not find any reason to complain of myself. Also, as God never sends evil, any more than good, absolutely unmixed to men, my health continued at that time more than usually good; and, as I can do nothing without it, there are few things that I cannot do with it. It afforded me means to rouse up all my provision, and to lay my hand before the wound, that would else perhaps have gone farther, and experienced that, in my patience, I had some stand against fortune; and that it must be a great shock could throw me out of the saddle. I do not say this to provoke her to give me a more vigorous charge; I am her humble servant, and submit to her pleasure. Let her be content with what she has done, in God's name. Do you ask if I am sensible of her assaults? Yes, certainly. But, as those who are possessed and oppressed with sorrow, may sometimes suffer themselves, nevertheless, by intervals to taste a little pleasure, and are sometimes surprised with a smile, so have I so much power over myself as to make my ordinary condition quiet and free from disturbing thoughts; but I suffer myself withal, by fits, to be surprised with the stings of those unpleasing imaginations, that assault me whilst I am arming myself to drive them away, or at least to wrestle with them.

Account of a fatal plague that happened at that time in the country where Montaigne lived.

But behold another aggravation of the evil, which befell me in the tail of the rest. Both without doors and within, I was assaulted with a plague, most violent in comparison of all others; for, as sound bodies are subject to more grievous maladies, forasmuch as they are not to be forced but by such, so my very healthful air, where no contagion, though very near, in the memory of man, had ever taken footing, coming to be corrupted, produced strange effects:—

> Mista senum et juvenum densantur funera; nullum
> Sævâ caput Proserpinâ fugit.[1]

[1] Horace, *Od.* i. 28, 19.

"Of old and young see thousands die;
No one from cruel Proserpine can fly."

I had to suffer this pleasant condition, that the sight of my house was frightful to me; whatever I had there was without guard, and left to the mercy of every one. I myself, who am of so hospitable a nature, was myself in very great distress for a retreat for my family; a wild and scattered family, frightful both to its friends and itself, and filling every place with horror where it attempted to settle; having to shift abode as soon as any one's finger began to ache; all diseases are then concluded to be the plague, and people do not stay to examine what they are. And the mischief is, that, according to the rules of art, in every danger that a man comes near, he must undergo a quarantine in the suspense of his infirmity, your imagination all that while tormenting you at pleasure, and turning even your health itself into a fever. Yet all this would have gone the less to my heart, had I not withal been compelled to be sensible of others' sufferings, and miserably to serve six months together for a guide to this caravan; for I carry my antidotes within myself, which are resolution and patience. Apprehension, which is particularly to be feared in this disease, does not much trouble me; and if, being alone, I should have taken it, it had been a more sprightly and a longer flight; 'tis a kind of death that I do not think of the worse sort; 'tis usually short, stupid, without pain, and consoled by the public condition; without ceremony, without mourning, and without a crowd. But as to the people about us, the hundredth part of them could not be saved:—

Videas desertaque regna
Pastorum, et longe saltus lateque vacantes.[1]

"Deserted realms now may'st thou see of swains,
And everywhere forsaken groves and plains."

In this place, my greatest revenue is manual; what an hundred men ploughed for me lay a long time fallow.

[1] Virgil, *Georgic.* iii. 476.

But then what example of resolution did we not see in the simplicity of all this people? Every one generally renounced all care of life; the grapes, the principal wealth of the country, hung in clusters upon the vines; every one indifferently preparing for, and expecting death, either to-night or to-morrow, with a countenance and voice so far from fear, as if they had contracted with death in this necessity, and that it had been a universal and inevitable sentence. 'Tis always such; but how slender a hold has the resolution of dying? The distance and difference of a few hours, the sole consideration of company, renders the apprehension and the idea various to us. Do but observe these; by reason that they died in the same month, children, young people and old, they were no longer astonished at it, they no more lamented. I saw some who were afraid of staying behind, as in a dreadful solitude; and I did not commonly observe any other solicitude amongst them than that of sepulture; they were troubled to see the dead bodies scattered about the fields at the mercy of beasts, which presently began to flock about them. How differing are the fancies of men! The Neorites, a nation subjected by Alexander, threw the bodies of their dead in the deepest parts of their woods, on purpose to have them there eaten, the only sepulture reputed happy amongst them.[1] Some, who were yet in health, digged their own graves; others laid them down in them whilst yet alive; and a labourer of mine, while dying, with his hands and feet pulled the earth upon him. Was not this to nestle and settle himself to sleep at greater ease? A bravery, in some sort, like that of the Roman soldiers, who, after the battle of Cannæ, were found with their heads thrust into holes in the earth, which they had made, and there suffocated themselves, with their own hands pulling the earth about their ears.[2] In short, a whole nation by custom was brought to a discipline nothing inferior in undauntedness to the most studied and premeditated resolution.

The fortitude of the common people in this general desolation.

[1] Diod. Siculus, xvii. 105.

[2] Livy, xxii. 51.

Whether in the calamities of life we derive any great advantages from the instructions of science.

Most of the instructions of learning, to encourage us, have in them more of show than of force, and of ornament than effect. We have abandoned nature, and would teach her what to do; she who did so happily and so securely lead us; and in the mean time, from the footsteps of her instructions, and that little which, by the benefit of ignorance, remains of her image imprinted in the life of this rustic rout of unpolished men, learning is constrained every day to borrow thence to make a pattern for her disciples of constancy, tranquillity, and innocence. 'Tis a fine thing to see, that these, full of so much fine knowledge, have to imitate this foolish simplicity, and that in the principal acts of virtue; and that our wisdom must learn, even from beasts, the most profitable instructions in the greatest and most necessary concerns of human life, as how we are to live and die, manage our goods, love and bring up our children, and maintain justice; a singular testimony of human infirmity; and that this reason we so handle at our pleasure, finding evermore some diversity and novelty, leaves with us no apparent trace of nature; and that they have done with all men, as perfumers do with oil; they have sophisticated it with so many argumentations and far-fetched discourses, that it is become variable, and particular to every one of them, and has lost its proper, constant, and universal face, and we must seek testimony from beasts, not subject to favour, corruption, or diversity of opinions; for it is indeed true that even they themselves do not always go exactly in the path of nature; but wherein they do swerve, 'tis so little, that you may always see the track; as horses that are led make several bounds and curvets, but 'tis always at the length of the collar, and they still follow him that leads them; and as a hawk takes his flight, but still under the restraint of his string.[1] *Exilia, tormenta, bella, morbos, naufragia meditare . . . ut nullo sis malo tiro;*[2] "Meditate upon banishments,

[1] Hawks that were under tuition had a long string tied to their feet, which the falconer retained the other end of.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 91, 107.

tortures, wars, diseases, and shipwrecks, that thou mayest not be to seek in any disaster," what good will this curiosity do us, to preoccupy all the inconveniences of human nature, and to prepare ourselves, with so much trouble, against things which, peradventure, will never befall us? *Parem passis tristitiam facit, pati posse;*[1] "it troubles men as much that they may possibly suffer, as if they really did;" not only the blow, but the wind of the blow, strikes us;[2] or like frantic people, for 'tis certainly a frenzy, to go now and whip yourself because it may so fall out that fortune may one day make you undergo it; and to put on your furred gown at Midsummer, because you will stand in need of it at Christmas? Throw yourselves, say they, into the experience of all the evils, the most extreme that can possibly befall you; assure yourselves there. On the contrary the most easy and most natural way would be to banish even the thoughts of them; they will not come soon enough, forsooth; their true being will not be with us long enough, we must lengthen and extend them, and incorporate them in us beforehand, and there entertain them, as if they would not otherwise sufficiently press upon our senses. "We shall find them heavy enough when they come," says one of our masters, not of one of the tender, but of one of the most severe sects; "in the mean time favour thyself, believe what pleases thee best. What good will it do thee to anticipate and gather in beforehand thy ill fortune, to lose the present for fear of the future, and to make thyself miserable now, because thou art to be so in time?"[3] These are his words. Learning indeed, does us one good office, in instructing us exactly in the dimension of evils,—

> Curis acuens mortalia corda![4]
>
> "He bade sad care make keen the heart;"

'twere pity that any part of their grandeur should escape our sense and knowledge!

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 74.
[2] Id. *ib.*
[3] Id. *ib.* 13 and 98.
[4] Virgil, *Georgic.* i. 123.

Of what use is preparation for death.

'Tis certain that, for the most part, the preparation for death has administered more torment than the thing itself. It was of old truly said, and by a very judicious author: *Minus afficit sensus fatigatio quam cogitatio.*[1] "Suffering itself does less afflict the senses than the apprehension of suffering." The sentiment of present death sometimes of itself animates us with a prompt resolution no more to avoid a thing that is utterly inevitable. Many gladiators have been seen, in the olden time, who, after having fought timorously and ill, have courageously entertained death, offering their throats to the enemy's sword, and bidding them dispatch. The remote sight of future death requires a constancy that is slow and lazy, and consequently hard to be got. If you know not how to die, never trouble yourself; nature will fully and sufficiently instruct you upon the spot; she will exactly do that business for you; take you no care:—

> Incertam frustra, mortales, funeris horam
> Quæritis, et quâ sit mors aditura viâ.
> Pœna minor, certam subito perferre ruinam;
> Quod timeas, gravius sustinuisse diu.[2]

> "Mortals, in vain's your curiosity
> To know the hour and death that you must die;
> Better your fate strike with a sudden blow,
> Than that you long should what you fear foreknow."

That death ought not to be premeditated.

We trouble life by the care of death, and death by the care of life; the one torments, the other frights us. 'Tis not against death that we prepare, that is too momentary a thing; a quarter of an hour's suffering, without consequence, without hurt, does not deserve particular precepts. To say truth, we prepare ourselves against the preparations of death. Philosophy orders us always to have death before our eyes, to foresee and consider it before the time, and after gives us rules and precautions to provide that this foresight and thought do us no

[1] Quintil. *Instit. Orat.* i. 12.
[2] The two first verses are in Propertius, ii. 27, 1. I know not whence Montaigne took the others.

harm. Just so do physicians, who throw us into diseases, to the end they may have whereon to lay out their drugs and their art. If we have not known how to live, 'tis wrong to teach us to die, and make the end disform from all the rest; if we have known how to live constantly and quietly, we shall know how to die so too. They may boast as much as they please: *Tota philosophorum vita, commentatio mortis est;*[1] "the whole life of a philosopher is the meditation of his death;" but I fancy that, though it be the end, 'tis not the aim of life; 'tis his end, his extremity, but nevertheless not his object. She ought herself to be to herself her own aim and design; her true study is to order, govern, and suffer herself. In the number of several other offices, that the general and principal chapter of knowing how to live comprehends, is this article of knowing how to die; and did not our fears give it weight, one of the lightest too.

The true aim of life.

To judge of them by the utility, and by the naked truth, the lessons of simplicity are not much inferior to those which learning preaches to us; on the contrary, men differ in sentiment and force; we must lead them to their own good, according to their capacities by various ways.

Simple nature disposes us to die with a better grace than died Aristotle, &c.

Quo me cumque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes.[2]

"For as the tempest drives, I shape my course."

I never saw any countryman among my neighbours cogitate with what countenance and assurance he should pass over his last hour; nature teaches him not to dream of death till he is dying; and then he does it with a better grace than Aristotle, upon whom death presses with a double weight, both of itself, and of so long a premeditation. Wherefore it was the opinion of Cæsar that the least premeditated death was the easiest and the most happy:[3] *Plus dolet quam necesse est, qui*

[1] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* i. 30.
[2] Horace, *Epist.* i. 1, 15.
[3] See Suetonius, Cæsar, c. 87.

ante dolet quam necesse est.[1] "He, grieves more than is necessary, who grieves before it is necessary." The sharpness of this imagination springs from our curiosity. Thus do we ever hinder ourselves, desiring to prevent and govern natural ordinances. 'Tis only for the learned to dine the worse for it, when in the best health, and that they have the best stomachs, and to frown and be out of humour at the image of death. The common sort stand in need of no remedy of consolation but just in the shock, and when the blow comes, and consider no more about it but just what they endure. Is it not then, as we say, that the stupidity and want of apprehension in the vulgar gives them that patience in present evils, and that profound indifference as to future ill accidents; that their souls, being more gross and dull, are less penetrable and not so easily moved? If it be so, let us henceforth, in God's name, teach nothing but ignorance; 'tis the utmost fruit that the sciences promise us, to which this stupidity so gently leads its disciples.

We should have no want of good masters, who are interpreters of natural simplicity. Socrates shall be one; for, as I remember, he speaks something to this purpose to the judges who sat upon his life and death: "I am afraid, sirs, that if I entreat you to put me to death, I shall confirm the charge of my accusers, which is, that I pretend to be wiser than others, as having some more secret knowledge of things that are above and below us. I know that I have neither frequented nor known death, nor have ever seen any person that has tried his qualities, from whom to inform myself. Such as fear it presuppose they know it; as for my part, I neither know what it is, nor what they do in the other world. Death is, perhaps, an indifferent thing; perhaps, a thing to be desired. 'Tis nevertheless to be believed, if it be a transmigration from one place to another, that it is a bettering of one's condition, to go and live with so many great persons deceased, and to be exempt

Socrates's pleadings.

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 98.

from having any more to do with unjust and corrupt judges. If it be an annihilation of our being, 'tis yet a bettering of one's condition, to enter into a long and peaceable night; we find nothing more sweet in life than a quiet and profound sleep without dreams. The things that I know to be evil, as to offend one's neighbour, and to disobey one's superior, whether it be God or man, I carefully avoid; such as I do not know whether they be good or evil, I cannot fear them. If I go to die, and leave you alive, the gods only know whether it will go better with you or with me; wherefore, as to what concerns me, you may do as you shall think fit. But, according to my method of advising just and profitable things, I affirm that you will do your conscience more right to set me at liberty, unless you see farther into the cause than I; and judging according to my past actions, both public and private, according to my intentions, and according to the profit so many of our citizens, both old and young, daily extract from my conversation, and the fruit that you reap from me yourselves, you cannot more duly acquit yourselves towards my merit than by ordering that, my poverty considered, I should be maintained in the Prytaneum at the public expense; a thing that I have often known you with less reason grant to others. Do not impute it to obstinacy or disdain that I do not, according to the custom, supplicate, and go about to move you to commiseration. I have both friends and kindred, not being, as Homer says, begotten of a block or of a stone, no more than others that are able to present themselves before you in tears and mourning; and I have three desolate children with which to move you to compassion; but I should do a shame to our city, at the age I am, and in the reputation of wisdom, wherein I now stand, to degrade myself by such an abject form. What would men say of the other Athenians? I have always admonished those who have frequented my lectures, not to redeem their lives by an unworthy action; and in the wars of my country, at Amphipolis, Potidea, Delia, and other expeditions where I

have been, I have effectually manifested how far I was from securing my safety by my shame. I should moreover interest your duty, and should tempt you to unbecoming things; for 'tis not for my prayers to persuade you, but the pure and solid reasons of justice. You have sworn to the gods to keep yourselves upright; and it would seem as if I suspected or would recriminate upon you, should I not believe that you are so; and I should give evidence against myself, not to believe them as I ought, mistrusting their conduct, and not purely committing my affair into their hands. I do wholly rely upon them, and hold myself assured they will do in this what shall be most fit both for you and me. Good men, whether living or dead, have no reason to fear the gods." [1]

Is not this innocent, true, frank, and infantine pleading of an unimaginable loftiness, and just beyond all example, and in what a necessity employed? In earnest he had very good reason to prefer it to that which the great orator Lysias had penned for him; [2] admirably couched indeed in the judiciary style, but unworthy of so noble a criminal. Should a suppliant voice have been heard out of the mouth of Socrates? that lofty virtue have struck sail in the height of its glory? and his rich and powerful nature have committed his defence to art, and, in her highest proof, have renounced truth and simplicity, the ornaments of his speaking, to adorn and deck itself with the embellishments of figures, and equivocations of a premeditated speech? He did very wisely, and like himself, not to corrupt the tenour of an incorrupt life, and so sacred an image of human form, to spin out his decrepitude, the poor ekeing of a year, and to betray the immortal memory of that glorious end. He owed his life not to himself, but to the example of the world. Had it not been a public damage that he should have concluded it after a lazy and obscure manner? Doubtless, the careless and indifferent consideration of his death very well deserves that posterity should consider him so much the more, as they indeed do;

[1] Plato, *Apology for Socrates.* [2] Cicero, *de Orat.* i. 54.

and there is nothing so just in justice as that which fortune ordained for his recommendation; for the Athenians abominated all those who had been causers of his death to such a degree, that they avoided them as excommunicated persons, and looked upon everything as polluted that had been but touched by them; no one would wash with them in the public baths; none would salute, or own acquaintance with them; so that at last, unable longer to support this public hatred, they hanged themselves.[1]

If any one should think that, amongst so many other examples that I had to choose for my present purpose, out of the sayings of Socrates, I have made an ill choice of this, and shall judge that this discourse is elevated above common ideas, I must tell them that I have purposely done it; for I am of another opinion, and hold it a discourse, in rank and simplicity, much behind and inferior to common notions. He represents, in an artificial boldness and infantine security, the pure and first impression and ignorance of nature; for it is to be believed that we have naturally a fear of pain, but not of death, by reason of itself. 'Tis a part of our being, no less essential than living. To what end should nature have begot in us a hatred and horror of it, considering that it is of so great utility to her in maintaining the succession and vicissitude of her works? and that, in this universal republic, it concludes more to truth and augmentation, than to loss or ruin?

Death a part of our being, and very beneficial to nature.

> Sic rerum summa novatur.[2]
>
> "Thus nature doth herself renew."
>
> Mille animas una necata dedit,[3]

the failing of one life is the passage to a thousand other lives. Nature has imprinted in beasts the care of themselves and of their conservation; nay, they proceed so far as to be timorous of being worse, of hitting or hurting themselves, and of our haltering and beating them, misfortunes that are subject to

[1] Plutarch, *On Envy and Hatred.* [2] Lucretius, ii. 74. [3] Ovid, *Fast.* i. 380.

their sense and experience; but that we should kill them, they cannot fear, nor have they faculty to imagine and conclude such a thing as death. Yet it is said that we see them not only cheerfully undergo it (horses for the most part neighing, and swans singing when they die), but moreover seek it at need, of which elephants have given many examples.

Beasts naturally solicitous of their preservation.

Besides, this way of arguing which Socrates here makes use of, is it not equally admirable, both in simplicity and vehemence? Really it is much more easy to speak like Aristotle and to live like Cæsar, than to speak and live as Socrates did. There lies the extreme degree of perfection and difficulty; art cannot reach it. Now, our faculties are not so trained up. We do not try, we do not know them; we invest ourselves with those of others, and let our own lie idle; as some one may say to me that I have here only made a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the thread that ties them together.

In earnest, I have so far yielded to the public opinion, that those borrowed ornaments do accompany me; but I would not have them totally cover and hide me; that is quite contrary to my design, who desire to make a show of nothing but what is my own, and what is my own by nature; and had I taken my own advice, I had at all hazards spoken purely alone. I more and more load myself every day, beyond my purpose and first method, upon the account of idleness and the humour of the age.[1] If it misbecomes me, as I believe it does, 'tis no matter; it may be of use to some other. Such there are who quote Plato and Homer, who never saw either of them; and I also have taken passages enough, distant from their source. Without pains and without learning, having a thousand volumes about me in the place where I write, I could

With what view Montaigne has charged his book with quotations.

[1] In fact, the first edition of the Essays (1580) has very few quotations. They are more numerous in the edition of 1588, but the multitude of ancient authorities which occasionally embarrass Montaigne's work, as it now stands, only date from the posthumous edition of 1595.

readily borrow, if I pleased, from a dozen scrap-gatherers, people that I do not much trouble myself withal, wherewith to embellish this treatise of physiognomy. There needs no more but a preliminary epistle of some German to stuff me with such; and we, in this way, go seeking a fine glory to cheat the sottish world. These hodge-podges of common-places, wherewith so many furnish their studies, are of little use but to common subjects, and serve but to show, and not to direct us; a ridiculous fruit of learning, that Socrates does so pleasantly canvass against Euthydemus. I have seen books made of things that were never either studied or understood, the author committing to several of his learned friends the examination of this and t'other matter to compile it; contenting himself, for his share, to have projected the design, and by his industry to have tied together this fagot of unknown provision; the ink and paper, at least, are his. This is to buy or borrow a book, and not to make one; 'tis to show men, not that a man can make a book, but that, whereof they may be in doubt, that he cannot make one. A president, in my hearing, boasted that he had clustered two hundred and odd common quotations in one of his judgments; in telling which he deprived himself of the glory that had been attributed to him for the speech; in my opinion 'twas a pusillanimous and absurd boast for such a subject and such a person. I do quite contrary; and, amongst so many borrowed things, am glad if I can steal one, disguising and altering it for some new service. At the hazard of having it said that 'tis for want of understanding its natural use, I give it some particular address of my own, to the end it may not be so absolutely another's. These set their thefts in show, and value themselves upon them; and they have more credit with the laws than with me. We naturalists think that there is a great and incomparable preference in the honour of invention to that of quotation.

If I would have spoken by learning, I had spoken sooner; I had written in a time nearer to my studies, when I had

more wit, and a better memory; and would rather have trusted to the vigour of that age than this, if I would have professed writing. And what if this gracious favour which fortune has lately offered me by the means of this work,[1] had befallen me in such a time of my life, instead of this, wherein 'tis equally desirable to possess, and ready to lose? Two of my acquaintances, great men in this faculty, have, in my opinion, lost half, in refusing to publish at forty years' old, that they might stay till threescore. Maturity has its defects as well as greenness, and worse; and old age is as unfit for this kind of business as any other; he that commits his decrepitness to the press is a fool, if he thinks to squeeze anything out thence that does not relish of dotage and stupidity; our wits grow costive and thick in growing old. I deliver my ignorance in pomp and state, and my learning meagrely and poorly; this accidentally and accessorily, that principally and expressly; and write purposely of nothing, but of nothing; nor of any science, but that of inscience. I have chosen a time when my life, which I am to give an account of, lies wholly before me; what remains has more to do with death; and of my death only should I find it a prating death, as others do, I would moreover give an account at my departure.

Old age unfit for writing of books.

Socrates was a perfect exemplar in all great qualities; and I am vexed that he had so deformed a body and face as they say, and so unsuitable to the beauty of his soul; himself being so amorous, and such an admirer of beauty; nature surely did him wrong. There is nothing more likely than a conformity and relation of the body to the soul: *Ipsi animi magni refert quali in corpore locati sint; multa enim e corpore existunt quæ acuant mentem, multa quæ obtundant:*[2] "It is of great consequence in what bodies souls are placed, for many things spring from the body that sharpen the mind, and many that blunt and dull it." This speaks of an unnatural ugliness and

Socrates's a deformed body, unsuitable to the beauty of his mind.

[1] The author probably refers to the friendship of Mademoiselle de Gournay, which the perusal of his Essays procured him.
[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 33.

deformity of limbs; but we call that ill-favouredness also, an unseemliness at first sight, which is principally lodged in the face, and distastes us by slight causes, and by the complexion, a spot, a rude countenance, sometimes from some inexplicable cause, in members nevertheless of good symmetry and perfect in themselves. The ugliness that clothed a very beautiful soul in La Boëtie was of this predicament; that superficial ugliness, which nevertheless is always the most imperious, is of least prejudice to the state of the mind, and of little certainty in the opinion of men. The other, which, by a more proper name, is called deformity, more substantial, strikes deeper in; not every shoe of smooth shining leather, but every shoe neatly made, shows the interior shape of the foot. Socrates said of his ugliness, that it accused just as much in his soul, had he not corrected it by education; but, in saying so, I believe he did but jest, as his custom was; never so excellent a soul made itself.

What beauty is, and how much to be esteemed.

I cannot often enough repeat how much I hold beauty to be a potent and advantageous quality; he called it a short tyranny, and Plato, the privilege of nature. We have nothing that excels it in credit; it holds the first rank in the commerce of men; it presents itself to meet us, seduces and prepossesses our judgments with great authority and wonderful impression. Phryne had lost her cause, though in the hands of an excellent advocate, if, opening her robe, she had not corrupted her judges by the lustre of her beauty.[1] And I find that Cyrus, Alexander, and Cæsar, the three masters of the world, never neglected beauty in their greatest affairs; no more did the first Scipio. The same word in Greek signifies both fair and good, and the Holy Word often calls those good whom it would call fair. I readily concur in the high rank given, in the song, which Plato[2] calls an idle one, taken out of some

[1] Sextus Empiricus *adversus Mathematicos*, ii. 65, and Quintilian, ii. 15, who ascribe to Phryne the invention of this expedient, but Athenæus gives the honour of thus gaining her cause to Hyperides, her advocate.

[2] In the *Gorgias*.

Beautiful persons ought to command.

of the ancient poets, to these goods; "health, beauty, and riches." Aristotle says[1] that the right of command belongs to the beautiful; and when there are persons whose beauty comes near the images of the gods, that then veneration is in like manner their due. To one that asked him why people oftener and longer frequented the company of handsome persons? "The question," said he,[2] "is not to be asked by any but one that is blind." The most and the greatest philosophers paid for their schooling, and acquired wisdom by the favour and mediation of their beauty. Not only in the men that serve me, but also in the beasts, I consider this point within two fingers' breadth of goodness.

And yet I fancy that those features and moulds of face, and those lineaments by which men guess at our internal complexions, and our fortunes to come, are things that do not very directly and simply lie under the chapter of beauty and deformity, no more than every good odour and serenity of air promises health, nor all fog and stink infection in a time of pestilence. Such as accuse ladies of contradicting their beauty by their manners, do not always hit right; for, in a face which is none of the best, there may lie some air of probity and trust; as, on the contrary, I have seen betwixt two beautiful eyes menaces of a dangerous and malignant nature. There are some physiognomies that are favourable, and in a crowd of victorious enemies, you shall presently choose, amongst men you never saw before, one rather than another, to whom to surrender, and with whom to intrust your life, and yet not properly upon the consideration of beauty.

Whether any assurance may be derived from physiognomy.

A man's look is but a feeble guarantee, and yet is of some consideration too; and if I had to lash them, I would more severely scourge the wicked, who belie and betray the promises that nature has planted in their foreheads; I should with greater severity punish iniquity in a mild and gentle aspect. It seems as if

[1] *Politics*, i. 8. [2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, v. 20.

there were some happy and some unhappy faces; and I believe there is some art in distinguishing affable from simple faces, grave from rude, sullen from pensive, scornful from melancholic, and such other bordering qualities. There are beauties which are not only haughty, but sour; and others that are not only sweet, but, more than that, insipid; to prognosticate future adventures from these is a thing that I shall leave undecided.

I have, as to my own concern, as I have said elsewhere, simply and nakedly embraced this ancient rule; that "we cannot fail in following nature;" "that the sovereign precept is to conform ourselves to her." I have not, as Socrates did, corrected my natural complexions by the force of reason, and have not in the least molested my inclination by art; I have let myself go on as I came; I contend not; my two principal parts live of their own accord, in peace and good intelligence; but my nurse's milk, thanks be to God, was tolerably wholesome and good. Shall I say this by the way? that I see a certain image of scholastic propriety, almost only in use amongst us, in greater esteem than 'tis really worth; a slave to precepts, and fettered with hope and fear. I would have it such as that laws and religions should not make, but perfect and authorize it; that finds it has wherewithal to support itself without help; born and rooted in us from the seed of universal reason, and imprinted in every man by nature. That reason which rectified Socrates from his vicious bent, rendered him obedient to the gods, and to men in authority in his city; courageous in death, not because his soul is immortal, but because he is mortal. 'Tis a doctrine ruinous to all government, and much more hurtful than ingenious and subtle, which persuades the people that a religious belief is alone sufficient, and without conduct, to satisfy the divine justice. Custom demonstrates to us a vast distinction betwixt devotion and conscience.

I have a tolerable aspect, both in form and interpretation; **Montaigne's countenance a favourable one.**

Quid dixi, habere me? Imo habui, Chreme,[1]

Heu! tantum attriti corporis ossa vides;[2]

"Have, did I say? No, Chremes, I had once;
Of a worn body thou but see'st the bones;"

and that makes a quite contrary show to that of Socrates. It has often happened to me, that, upon the mere credit of my presence and air, persons who had no manner of knowledge of me, have put a very great confidence in me, whether in their own affairs or mine; and I have in foreign parts thence obtained favours singular and rare. But amongst the rest these two examples are perhaps worth particular relation: a certain person planned to surprise my house and me in it; his stratagem was to come to my gates alone, and to be importunate to be let in. I knew him by name, and had reason to repose a confidence in him, as being my neighbour, and something related to me; I caused the gates to be opened to him, as I do to every one. There he was, all aghast, his horse panting and in a foam. He told me this flam: "That about half a league off, he had met with a certain enemy of his, whom I also knew, and had heard of their quarrel; that this enemy had given him a very brisk chase, and that, having been surprised in disorder, and his party being too weak, he was fled to my gates for refuge; and that he was in great trouble for his followers, whom, he said, he concluded to be all either dead or taken." I innocently did my best to comfort, assure, and refresh him. Presently after come four or five of his soldiers, that presented themselves in the same countenance and affright to get in too; and after them more, and still more, very well mounted and armed, to the number of five-and-twenty, or thirty, pretending that they had the enemy at their heels. The mystery began a little to awake my suspicion; I was not ignorant what an age I lived in, how much my house might be envied, and I had several ex-

[1] Terence, *Heaut.* i. 1, 42.

[2] I know not whence Montaigne borrowed this verse.

amples of others of my acquaintances whom a similar mishap had befallen. So it was, that, knowing there was nothing to be got in having begun to do a courtesy, unless I went through with it, and that I could not disengage myself from them without spoiling all, I let myself go the most natural and simple way, as I always do, and invited them all to come in. And in truth, I am naturally very little inclined to suspicion and distrust; I willingly incline towards excuse, and the gentlest interpretation; I take men according to the common order, and do not any more believe those perverse and unnatural inclinations, unless convinced by manifest evidence, than I do monsters and miracles; and am, moreover, a man, who willingly commit myself to fortune, and throw myself headlong into her arms; and have hitherto found more reason to applaud than to condemn my conduct in so doing; having ever found her more solicitous of, more a friend to my affairs, than I am myself. There are some actions in my life wherein the conduct may justly be called difficult, or, if they please, prudent; yet of those, supposing the third part to be my own, certainly the other two thirds were absolutely and solely hers. We are, methinks, to blame, in not trusting Heaven enough with our affairs, and pretend more from our own conduct than belongs to us; and therefore it is that our designs so often miscarry; God is displeased at the extent we attribute to the rights of human prudence above his, and cuts them shorter, by how much the more we amplify them. The last comers kept themselves on horseback in my court, whilst their leader was with me in the parlour, who would not have his horse set up in the stable, saying he would immediately retire, so soon as he should have news of his men. He saw himself master of his enterprise, and nothing now remained but the execution. He has since several times said, for he was not ashamed to tell the story himself, that my countenance and frankness had snatched the treachery out of his hands. He again mounted his horse, his followers having continually their eyes intent upon him, to see when he would give the sign;

very much astonished to see him leave and give up his advantage.

Another time, relying upon I know not what truce, newly published in the army, I took a journey through a very fickle country. I had not rid far, but I was discovered, and two or three parties of horse, from several places, were sent out to take me; one of them the third day overtook me, where I was charged by fifteen or twenty gentlemen in vizors, followed at a distance by a band of harquebusiers. Here I was surrounded and taken, withdrawn into the thick of a neighbouring forest, dismounted, robbed, my trunks rifled, my cash-box taken, and my horses and equipage divided amongst new masters. We had in this copse a very long contest about my ransom, which they set so high, that it very well appeared I was not known to them. They were moreover in a very great debate about my life; and, in truth, there were several circumstances that threatened me in the danger I was in:—

Tunc animis opus, Æneа, tunc pectore firmo.[1]

"Then, then, Æneas, was there need,
Of an undaunted heart indeed."

I still insisted upon the truce, being willing they should only have the gain of what they had already taken from me, which was not to be despised, without promise of any other ransom. After two or three hours that we had been in this place, and that they had mounted me on a pitiful jade that was not likely to run from them, and committed me to the guard of fifteen or twenty harquebusiers, and dispersed my servants to others, having given order that they should carry us away prisoners different ways, and being already got some two or three musket-shots from the place,—

Jam prece Pollucis, jam Castoris implorata:[2]

"Whilst I implor'd Castor and Pollux' aid:"

behold a sudden and unexpected alteration among them. I

[1] *Æneid*, vi. 261. [2] Catullus, *Carm.* lxvi. 65

saw their chief return to me with gentler language, making search amongst the troopers for my dispersed goods, and causing as many as could be recovered to be restored to me, even to my casket; but the best present they made me was my liberty; for the rest did not much concern me in those days. The true cause of so sudden a change, and of this reconsideration, without any apparent impulse, and of so miraculous a repentance, in such a time, in a complotted and deliberate enterprise, and become just by custom (for at the first dash, I plainly confessed to them of what party I was, and whither I was going), was what I really do not yet rightly apprehend. The most eminent amongst them, who pulled off his vizor, and told me his name, then several times told me, over and over again, that I was obliged for my deliverance to my countenance, and the freedom and firmness of my words, that rendered me unworthy of such a mischance, and demanded assurance from me of the like courtesy. 'Tis probable that the divine bounty would make use of this vain instrument of my preservation, and moreover defended me the next day from other and worse ambushes, which these themselves gave me warning of. The last of these two gentlemen is yet living, to give an account of the story; the first was killed not long ago.

The simplicity of his intention, which was visible in his eyes, and his language, prevented his freedom in discourse from being resented.

If my face did not answer for me, if men did not read in my eyes and voice the innocence of my intentions, I had not lived so long without quarrels, and without giving offence, considering the indiscreet liberty I take, right or wrong, to say whatever comes at my tongue's end, and to judge so rashly of things. This way may with reason appear uncivil and ill adapted to our customs; but I have never met with any who have judged it outrageous or malicious, or that took offence at my liberty, if he had it from my own mouth; words repeated have another kind of sound and sense. Neither do I hate any person; and I am so slow to offend, that I cannot do it, even upon the account

of reason itself; and when occasion has called upon me to sentence criminals, I have rather chosen to fail in point of justice than to do it: *Ut magis peccari nolim quam satis animi ad vindicanda peccata habeam.*[1] "I had rather men should not offend, but I have not the heart to condemn them."

Aristotle reproached for being merciful.

Aristotle, 'tis said, was reproached for having been too merciful to a wicked man: "I was, indeed," said he,[2] "merciful to the man, but not to his wickedness." Ordinary judgments exasperate themselves to punishment, from horror of the fact; 'tis just this that cools mine; the horror of the first murder makes me fear the second, and the deformity of the first cruelty makes me abhor all imitation of it. That may be applied to me, who am but a knave of clubs, which was said of Charillus, king of Sparta: "He cannot be good, because he is not evil to the wicked:"[3] or thus, for Plutarch delivers it both these ways, as he does a thousand other things, variously and contrary to one another: "He must needs be good, because he is so even to the wicked."[4] Even as in lawful actions, I do not care to employ myself, when for such as are displeased at it; so to say the truth, in unlawful things, I do not make conscience enough of employing myself, when for such as are willing.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF EXPERIENCE.

Why experience is not a sure means to inform us of the truth of things.

No desire in us is more natural than that of knowledge. We try all ways that can lead to it; where reason is wanting, we therein employ experience,—

[1] Livy, xxix. 21.
[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, v. 17.
[3] Plutarch, *On the Difference between a Flatterer and a Friend*, and *On Envy and Hatred*.
[4] Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, c. 4.

Per varios usus artem experientia fecit,
Exemplo monstrante viam.[1]

"By several proofs experience art has made,
Example being guide."

which is a means much more weak and low; but truth is so great a thing, that we ought not to disdain any mediation that will lead us to it. Reason has so many forms that we know not which to take; experience has no fewer; the consequence we would draw from the conference of events is unsure, by reason they are always unlike. There is no quality so universal, in this image of things, as diversity and variety. Both the Greeks and Latins, and we, for the most express example of similitude, have pitched upon that of eggs; and yet there have been men, particularly one at Delphos, who could distinguish marks of difference amongst eggs so well, that he never mistook one for another; and, having many hens, could tell which had laid a particular egg![2] Dissimilitude intrudes itself of itself in our works; no art can arrive at a perfect similitude; neither Perrozet, nor any other cardmaker, can so carefully polish and blank the back of his cards, that some gamesters will not distinguish them by only seeing them shuffled by another. Resemblance does not so much make them one, as difference makes them another. Nature has obliged herself to make nothing other, that is not unlike.

Montaigne's opinion as to a multiplicity of laws

And yet I am not much pleased with his opinion, who thought by the multitude of laws to curb the authority of judges, in cutting them out their parcels; he was not aware that there is as much liberty and stretch in the interpretation of laws, as in their fashion; and they but fool themselves who think to lessen and stop our debates, by summoning us to the express words of the Bible, forasmuch as human wit does not find the field less spacious wherein to controvert the sense of another, than to deliver his own, and, as if there were less animosity and tartness in the glossing than in the invention. We see how

[1] Manil. i. 59.

[2] Cicero, *Acad.* ii. 18.

much he was deceived; for we have more laws in France than in all the rest of the world besides; and more than would be necessary for the government of all the worlds of Epicurus: *Ut olim flagitiis, sic nunc legibus laboramus:*[1] "So that as formerly we suffered from wickedness, so now we suffer from the laws:" and yet we have left so much to the opinion and decision of our judges, that there never was so full and uncontrolled a liberty. What have our legislators got by culling out a hundred thousand particular cases, and annexing to these a hundred thousand laws? This number holds no manner of proportion with the infinite diversity of human actions; the multiplication of our inventions will never arrive at the variety of examples; add to them a hundred times as many more; it will not, nevertheless, ever happen that, of events to come, there shall any one fall out that, in this great number of thousands of events so chosen and recorded, shall find any one, to which it can be so exactly coupled and compared, that there will not remain some circumstance and diversity which will require a variety of judgment. There is little relation betwixt our actions, that are in perpetual mutation, and fixed and immobile laws; the most to be desired, are those that are the most rare, the most simple and general; and I am further of opinion that it would be better for us to have none at all, than to have them in so prodigious numbers as we have.

The laws of nature better than our own.

Nature always gives them better than those are which we make ourselves; witness the picture of the golden age of the poets, and the state wherein we see nations live who have no other. Some there are who, for their only judge, take the first passer-by that travels over their mountains to determine their cause;[2] and others who on their market-day choose out some one amongst them upon the spot, to de-

Passengers made use of for judges.

[1] Tacitus, *Annal.* iii. 25.

[2] Montaigne probably refers to the little republic of San Marino, in the papal states. In the thirteenth century it was almost universal throughout Lombardy to intrust the administration of justice to foreigners.

cide all their controversies. What danger would there be that the wisest should so determine ours, according to occurrences, and at sight, without obligation of example and consequence? "Every shoe to his own foot." King Ferdinand, sending colonies to the Indies, wisely provided that they should not carry along with them any law students, for fear lest suits should get footing in that new world; as being a science, in its own nature, the mother of alteration and division; judging with Plato,[1] "That lawyers and physicians are the pests of a country."

How it comes to pass that the vulgar tongue, which serves for every other purpose, becomes obscure and ambiguous in covenants and testaments.

Whence does it come to pass that our common language, so easy for all other uses, becomes obscure and unintelligible in wills and contracts? and that he who so clearly expresses himself herein, whatever he speaks or writes, cannot find in this any way of declaring himself that he does not fall into doubt and contradiction? if it be not that the princes of this art, applying themselves with a peculiar attention to invent and cull out sounding words, and contrive artistical periods, have so weighed every syllable, and so thoroughly sifted every sort of seam, that they are now confounded and entangled in the infinity of figures, and so many minute divisions, that they can no more fall into any rule or prescription, nor any certain intelligence: *Confusum est quicquid usque in pulverem sectum est.*[2] "Whatever is beaten into powder is confused." As you have seen children trying to bring a mass of quicksilver into a certain number of parts, the more they press and work it, and endeavour to reduce it to their own will, the more they irritate the liberty of this generous metal; it mocks and evades their endeavour, and sparkles itself into so many separate bodies, as frustrate all account; so it is here; for in subdividing these subtleties we teach men to increase their doubts; they put us into a way of stretching and diversifying difficulties, they lengthen and disperse them. In sowing and retailing of

[1] *Republic*, iii.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 89.

questions they make the world to fructify and increase in uncertainties and disputes; as the earth is made fertile by being crumbled and moved about deep: *Difficultatem facit doctrina.*[1] "Doctrine begets difficulty." We doubted upon Ulpian, and are now still more perplexed with Bartolus and Baldus. We should efface the trace of this innumerable diversity of opinions, and not stuff ourselves with it, and stupefy posterity with it. I know not what to say to it; but experience makes it manifest that so many interpretations dissipate truth and break it. Aristotle wrote to be understood; which, if he could not be, much less will another less skilful; and a third than he who expressed his own thoughts. We open the matter, and spill it in pouring out; of one subject we make a thousand, and, in multiplying and subdividing, fall into the infinity of atoms of Epicurus. Never did two men make the same judgment of the same thing; and 'tis impossible to find two opinions exactly alike, not only in several men, but in the same men, at different times. I often find matter of doubt in things that the commentary disdains to take notice of. I am most apt to stumble in an even country, like some horses that I have known, who make most trips in the smoothest way.

Glosses and commentaries only serve to obscure the text, and especially that of the books of the law.

Who would not say that glosses augment doubts and ignorance, since there's no one book to be found, either human or divine, which the world busies itself about, the difficulties of which are cleared by interpretation. The hundredth commentator still refers you to the next, more knotty and perplexed than he; when were we ever agreed amongst ourselves: "this book has enough; there is no more to be said about it?" This is most apparent in the law; we give the authority of law to infinite doctors, infinite decisions, and as many interpretations; yet do we find any end of the need of interpreting? Is there, for all that, any progress or advancement towards peace? do we stand in need of any fewer advocates or

[1] Quintil. *Inst. Orat.* x. 3.

judges than when this great mass of law was yet in its first infancy? On the contrary, we darken and bury all intelligence; we can no more discover it but at the mercy of so many fences and barriers. Men do not know the natural disease of the mind; it does nothing but ferret and inquire, and is eternally wheeling, juggling, and perplexing itself, and, like silk-worms, suffocates itself with its own web: *Mus in pice:* "a mouse in a pitch-barrel;" it thinks it discovers at a great distance I know not what glimpse of light, and imaginary truth; but, whilst running to it, so many difficulties, hindrances, and new inquisitions cross it, that it loses its way, and is made drunk with the motion; not much unlike Æsop's dogs, that, seeing something like a dead body floating in the sea, and not being able to approach it, attempted to drink the water, to lay the passage dry, and so burst themselves. To which what one Crates[1] said of the writings of Heraclitus falls pat enough, "That they required a reader who could swim well," that the depth and weight of his doctrine might not overwhelm and choke him. 'Tis nothing but particular weakness that makes us content ourselves with what others or ourselves have found in this chase after knowledge; one of better understanding would not rest so content; there is always room for one to succeed us, nay, even for ourselves, and a route another way throughout; there is no end of our inquisitions, our end is in the other world. 'Tis a sign either that wit is grown shorter-sighted when it is satisfied, or that it is grown weary. No generous mind can stop in itself; it will still essay farther, and beyond its power; it has sallies beyond its effects. If it do not advance and press forward, and retire, rush, turn and wheel about, 'tis but half alive; its pursuits are without bound or method; its aliment is admiration, ambiguity the chase; which Apollo sufficiently declared, still speaking to us in a double, obscure, and oblique sense; not feeding, but amusing and puzzling us. 'Tis an irregular and perpetual motion, without example and

[1] Or rather *Socrates*, as the author probably wrote it. See Laertius, ii. 22.

without aim; its inventions heat, pursue, and interproduce one another:—

> Ainsi veoid on, en un ruisseau coulant,
> Sans fin l'une eau apres l'aultre roulant;
> Et tout de reng, d'un eternel conduict,
> L'une suyt l'aultre, et l'une l'aultre fuyt.
> Par ceste cy celle là est poulsée,
> Et ceste cy par l'aultre est devancée:
> Tousjours l'eau va dans l'eau; et tousjours est ce
> Mesme ruisseau, et tousiours eau diverse.[1]

> "So in a running stream one wave we see
> After another roll incessantly;
> And, as they glide, each does successively
> Pursue the other, each the other fly:
> By this that's evermore push'd on, and this
> By that continually preceded is:
> The water still does into water swill—
> Still the same brook, but diff'rent water still."

There is more ado to interpret interpretations than to interpret the things, and more books upon books than upon all other subjects; we do nothing but comment upon one another. Everywhere commentaries abound; of authors there is great scarcity. Is it not the principal and most reputed knowledge of our ages to understand the learned? Is it not the common and last end of all studies? Our opinions are grafted upon one another; the first serves for a stock to the second, the second to the third, and so on; thus step by step we climb the ladder; whence it comes to pass that he who is mounted highest has often more honour than merit, for he is got up but a grain upon the shoulders of the one before him.

How often, and perhaps how foolishly, have I stretched my book, to make it speak of itself? foolishly, if for no other reason but this, that I ought to call to mind what I say of others who do the same, "that these frequent amorous glances they cast upon their works, witness that their hearts pant with self-love, and that even the disdainful severity wherewith they

[1] La Boëtie, *in the Collection before referred to.*

lash and scourge them, are no other than the wanton dissimulations of a maternal kindness;" according to Aristotle,[1] whose valuing and undervaluing himself often spring from the same air of arrogancy; for as to my excuse, that I ought in this to have more liberty than others, forasmuch as I specially write of myself and of my writings, as I do of my other actions; that my theme returns to myself; I know not whether every one will take it.

Our disputes are endless, and most of them about words.

I have observed in Germany, that Luther has left as many divisions and disputes about the doubt of his opinions, and more, than he himself has raised upon the Holy Scriptures. Our contestation is verbal. I demand what nature is; what pleasure, circle, and substitution are? The question is about words, and is answered accordingly. A stone is a body, but if a man should further urge, "and what is a body?"—"substance;"—"and what is substance?" and so on,[2] he would drive the respondent to the end of his commonplace-book. We exchange one word for another, and very often for one less understood. I know better what man is, than I know what animal is, or mortal, or rational. To satisfy one doubt, they give me three; 'tis the hydra's head. Socrates asked Menon what virtue was? "There is," says Menon, "the virtue of a man and of a woman, of a magistrate, and of a private person, of an old man, and of a child." "Very well," says Socrates, "we were in quest of one virtue, and thou hast brought us a whole swarm;"[3] we put one question, and they return us a whole hive. As no event and no face entirely resembles another, so do they not entirely differ, an ingenious mixture of nature. If our faces were not alike, we could not distinguish man from beast; if they were not unlike, we could not distinguish one man from another. All things hold by some similitude, all examples halt, and the relation which is drawn from experience is always faulty and imperfect. Compari-

1 *Ethics*, iv. 13
2 Plato, *Menon*.
3 See Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, book i. ch. 4, sect. 10, and book ii. ch. 23, sect. 2.

sons are always coupled at one end or the other; so do the laws serve, and are fitted to every one of our affairs, by some wrested, biassed, and forced interpretation.

Imperfection of the laws that concern the subjects of a state.

Since the Ethic laws, that concern the particular duty of every one in himself, are so hard to be taught and observed, as we see they are, 'tis no wonder if those which govern so many particular men are much more so. Do but consider the form of this justice that governs us; 'tis a true testimony of human weakness, so full is it of error and contradiction! What we find to be favour and severity in justice, and we find so much of them both, that I know not whether the mean is so often met with, are sick parts and improper members of the very body and office of justice. Some country people have run in to bring me news, in great haste, that they just left, in a forest of mine, a man with a hundred wounds upon him, who was yet breathing, and begged of them water for pity's sake, and help to carry him to some place of relief; but they said they durst not go near him, but ran away, lest the officers of justice should catch them there, and, as it falls out with those who are found near a murdered person, they should be called in question about this accident, to their utter ruin, having neither money nor friends to defend their innocence. What could I say to these people? 'Tis certain that this office of humanity would have brought them into trouble.

How many innocent persons have we known that have been punished without the judge's fault, and how many that have not arrived at our knowledge? This happened in my time. Certain men were condemned to die for a murder committed; their sentence, if not pronounced, at least determined and concluded on. The judges, just at the nick, are advertised by the officers of an inferior court hard by, that they have some men in custody, who have directly confessed the said murder, and make an indubitable discovery of all the particulars of the fact. 'Twas, notwithstanding, put to the question, whether or no they ought to suspend execution

of the sentence already passed upon the first accused; they considered the novelty of the example, and the consequence of reversing judgments; that the sentence of death was duly passed, and the judges deprived of repentance. To conclude, these poor devils were sacrificed to the forms of justice. Philip,[1] or some other, provided against a like inconvenience, after this manner: he had condemned a man in a great fine towards another, by a determinate judgment. The truth some time after being discovered, he found that he had passed an unjust sentence; on one side was the reason of the cause, on the other side the reason of the judicial forms. He in some sort satisfied both, leaving the sentence in the state it was, and out of his own purse recompensing the interest of the condemned party. But he had to do in a reparable affair; the people I speak of were irreparably hanged. How many sentences have I seen more criminal than the crimes themselves?

Ancient opinions on the subject of justice.

All which makes me remember the ancient opinions:[2] "That there is a necessity a man must do wrong by detail, who will do right in gross; and injustice in little things, that will come to justice in great; that human justice is formed after the model of physic, according to which, all that is useful is also just and honest. And of what is held by the Stoics, that nature herself proceeds contrary to justice in most of her works; and of what is received by the Cyrenaicks, that there is nothing just of itself;[3] that customs and laws make justice; and what the Theodorians hold, that maintain theft, sacrilege, and all sorts of uncleanness, just in a wise man, if he knows them to be profitable to him."[4] There is no remedy; I am in the same case that Alcibiades was,[5] that I will never, if I can help it, put myself into the hands of a man who shall determine of my head, where my life and honour shall more de

1 *Philip of Macedon.* See Plutarch, *Apothegms.*

2 Plutarch, *Inst. for those who manage State Affairs*, c. 21.

3 Laertius, ii. 92.

4 Id. i. 99.

5 Who said that in such a case he would not trust his own mother. See Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 23.

pend upon the care and diligence of my attorney, than my own innocence. I would venture myself with such a justice as would take notice of my good deeds as well as my ill, and where I had as much to hope as to fear; indemnity is not sufficient pay to a man, who does better than not to do amiss. Our justice presents us but one hand, and that the left; let him be who he will, he shall be sure to go off with loss.

In China, of which kingdom the government and arts, without commerce with, or knowledge of ours, surpasses our examples in several parts of excellence; and of which the history gives me to understand how much greater and more various the world is, than either the ancients or we have been able to penetrate; the officers deputed by the prince to visit the state of his provinces, as they punish those who behave themselves ill in their places, so do they liberally reward those who have carried themselves above the common sort, and beyond the necessity of their duty. They there present themselves, not only to be approved, but to get; not simply to be paid, but have presents made them. No judge, thank God, has ever yet spoken to me, in the quality of a judge, upon any account whatever, whether my own or that of another, criminal or civil; no prison has ever received me, even as a visitor. Imagination renders the very outside of a jail disagreeable to me. I so love freedom of will and action, that were I interdicted the remotest corners of the Indies, I should live a little more uneasy thereat. And whilst I can find either earth or air open in any part of the world, I will never live in any place where I must hide myself. Good God! how ill should I endure the condition wherein I see so many people, nailed to a corner of the kingdom, deprived of the privilege of entering into the principal cities and courts, and the liberty of the public roads, for having quarrelled with our laws? If those under which I live should but wag a finger at me by way of menace, I would immediately go seek out others, let them be where they would; all my little prudence, in the

Montaigne never had a suit in any court of justice.

civil wars wherein we are now engaged, is employed, that they may not hinder my liberty of going and coming.

What it was that in Montaigne's time kept up the credit of the laws.

Now the laws keep up their credit, not because they are just, but because they are laws; that is the mystic foundation of their authority; they have no other of any service. They are often made by fools; more often by men that, out of hatred to equality, fail in equity; but always by men who are vain and irresolute authors. There is nothing so much, nor so grossly, nor so ordinarily faulty, as the laws. Whoever obeys them because they are just, does not justly obey them as he ought. Our French laws, by their irregularity and deformity, do in some sort lend a helping hand to the disorder and corruption which is manifest in their dispensation and execution. The command is so perplexed and inconstant, that it in some sort excuses both disobedience and defect in the interpretation, the administration, and the observation of it. What fruit then soever we may extract from experience, yet that will little advantage our institution, which we draw from foreign examples, if we make so little profit of that we have of our own, which is more familiar to us, and certainly sufficient to instruct us in that whereof we have need. I study myself more than any other subject; 'tis my metaphysics, 'tis my physics.

Quâ Deus hanc mundi temperet arte domum;
Quâ venit exoriens, quâ deficit, unde coactis
Cornibus in plenum menstrua luna redit;
Unde salo superant venti, quid flamine captet
Eurus, et in nubes unde perennis aqua;
Sit ventura dies, mundi quæ subruat arces,[1]
Quærite, quos agitat mundi labor.[2]

"By what means God the universe does sway,
Or how the pale-faced sister of the day,
When, in increasing, can her horns unite,
Till they contract into a full orb'd light;
Why winds do of the sea the better get,
Why Eurus blows, and clouds are always wet;

1 Propertius, iii. 5, 26.

2 Lucan, i. 417.

What day the world's great fabric must o'erthrow,
Let them inquire, would the world's secrets know."

In this university, I suffer myself to be ignorantly and negligently led by the general law of the world. I shall know it well enough when I feel it; my learning cannot make it alter its course. It will not change itself for me; 'tis folly to hope it, and a greater folly to concern one's self about it, seeing it is necessarily alike, public and common. The goodness and capacity of the governor ought absolutely to discharge us of all care of the government. Philosophical inquisitions and contemplations serve for no other use but to increase our curiosity. Philosophers, with great reason, send us back, to the rules of nature; but they have nothing to do with so sublime a knowledge. They falsify them, and present us her face painted with too high and too sophisticated a colour, whence spring so many different portraits of so uniform a subject. As she has given us feet to walk withal, so has she given us prudence to guide us in life; not such an ingenious, robust, and majestic prudence as that of their invention, but yet one that is easy, quiet, and salutiferous; and that very well performs what the other promises, in him who has the good fortune to know how to employ it sincerely and regularly, that is to say, according to nature. The most simply to commit a man's self to nature, is to do it the most wisely. Oh, what a soft, easy, and wholesome pillow is ignorance and incuriosity, whereon to repose a well-contrived head![1]

I had rather understand myself well in myself, than in Cicero.[2] Of the experience I have of myself, I find enough to make me wise, if I were but a good scholar; whoever will call to mind the excess of his past anger, and to what a degree that fever transported him, will see the deformity of this passion better than in Aristotle, and conceive a more

[1] "Il est une précieuse ignorance, tresor d'une ame pure, qui met toute sa félicité à se replier sur elle même."—Rousseau, *Disc. sur les Lettres.*

[2] The edition of 1588 has "than in Plato."

just hatred against it. Whoever will remember the hazards he has run, those that threaten him, and the light occasions that have removed him from one state to another, will by that prepare himself for future changes, and the knowledge of his condition. The life of Cæsar himself has no greater example for us than our own; both popular and imperial, it is still a life to which all human accidents may refer. Let us but listen to it, and we may apply to ourselves all that we have principal need of; whoever shall call to memory how many and many times he has been mistaken in his own judgment, is he not a great fool if he does not ever after distrust it? When I find myself convinced, by the reason of another, of a false opinion, I do not learn so much what he has said to me that is new, and from my ignorance in this particular thing; that would be no great acquisition, as I do in general my own weakness, and the treachery of my understanding, whence I extract the reformation of the whole mass. In all my errors I do the same; and find from this rule great utility to life; I regard not the species and individual, as a stone that I have stumbled at; I learn to suspect my steps throughout, and to regulate them. To learn that a man has said or done a foolish thing is nothing; a man must learn that he is nothing but a fool, a much more ample and important instruction. The false steps that my memory has so often made, even then when it was most secure and confident of itself, are not idly thrown away; it may now swear to me and assure me as much as it will, I shake my ears, and trust it not; the first opposition that is made to my testimony puts me into suspense, and I durst not rely upon it in anything of moment, nor warrant it in another body's concerns; and were it not that what I do for want of memory, others do more often for want of faith, I should always, in matter of fact, rather choose to take truth from another's mouth than my own. If every one would pry into the effects and circumstances of the passions that sway him, as I have done into those which fell to my lot, he would see them coming, and

would a little break their impetuosity and career; they do not always seize us on a sudden; there is threatening and degrees:—

> Fluctus uti primo cœpit cum albescere vento,
> Paulatim sese tollit mare, et altius undas
> Erigit, inde imo consurgit ad æthera fundo.[1]

> "As the sea first begins to foam and fret,
> Thence higher swells, higher, and higher yet,
> Till at the last the waves so high do rise,
> They seem to bid defiance to the skies."

Judgment holds in me a magisterial seat; at least, it carefully endeavours to make it so; it lets my appetites take their own course, as also hatred and friendship; nay, even that I bear to myself, without alteration or corruption; if it cannot reform the other parts according to its own model, at least, it suffers not itself to be corrupted by them, but plays its game apart.

That advertisement to every one to know himself should be of important effect, since the god of wisdom and light caused it to be writ on the front of his temple,[2] as comprehending all he had to counsel us. Plato says, also, that prudence is no other thing but the execution of this ordinance; and Socrates minutely verifies the same in Xenophon. The difficulties and obscurity are not discerned in any science, but by those that are got into it; for a certain degree of knowledge is required to enable a man to know that he knows not; and we must thrust against a door to know whether it be bolted against us or not; whence this Platonic subtlety springs; that "neither they who know are to inquire, because they know; nor they who do not know, because to inquire, they must know what they inquire about."[3] So in this "to know one's self," that every man is seen so resolved and satisfied with himself, that every man thinks himself sufficiently understanding, signifies that every one understands nothing

[1] *Æneid*, vii. 528.
[2] *Apollo*, on the front of his temple at Delphi.
[3] Plato, *Menon*.

at all; as Socrates gives Euthydemus to learn.[1] I, who profess nothing else, do therein find such depth and so infinite a variety, that all the fruit I have reaped from my apprenticeship serves only to make me sensible how much I have to learn. To my weakness, so often confessed, I owe the propension I have to modesty, to obedience, to the beliefs prescribed me, to a constant coldness and moderation of opinions, and a hatred of that troublesome and wrangling arrogance, wholly believing and trusting in itself, the capital enemy of discipline and truth. Do but hear them domineer; the first trash they utter, 'tis in the style wherewith men establish religion and laws: *Nihil est turpius, quam cognitioni et perceptioni assertionem approbationem que præcurrere.*[2] "Nothing is more absurd than that assertion and admission should precede knowledge and precept." Aristarchus said,[3] that anciently there were scarcely seven wise men to be found in the world, and in his time scarce so many fools; have we not more reason than he to say so in this age of ours? Affirmation and obstinacy are express signs of want of wit. A fellow has stumbled and knocked his nose against the ground a hundred times in a day, and yet he will be at his ergotisms as resolute and assured as before; so that one would conclude he had had some new soul and vigour of understanding infused into him since, and that it happened to him as to that ancient son of the earth,[4] who acquired new strength, and was made more daring by his fall:—

> Cui cum tetigere parentem,
> Jam defecta vigent renovato robore membra:[5]

> "Whose broken limbs upon his mother laid,
> Immediately new force and vigour had:"

so the incorrigible coxcomb thinks he assumes a new understanding by undertaking a new dispute. 'Tis by my own experience that I accuse human ignorance, which is in my opinion the surest part of the world's school. Such as will

[1] Xenophon, *Mem. on Socrates*, iv. 2, 24.
[2] Cicero, *Acad.* i. 13.
[3] Plutarch, *On Brotherly Love.*
[4] Antæus.
[5] Luc. iv. 599.

not conclude it in themselves, by so vain an example as mine, or of their own, let them believe it from Socrates, the master of masters; for the philosopher Antisthenes said to his disciples:[1] "Let us go and hear Socrates; there I will be a pupil with you;" and maintaining the dogma of the Stoical sect, "that virtue was sufficient to make a life completely happy, having no need of any other thing whatever," he added, "except the force of Socrates."

The long attention that I employ in considering myself, does also fit me to judge tolerably of others; and there are few things whereof I speak better, and with better excuse. I frequently happen to see and distinguish the conditions of my friends more exactly than they do themselves; I have astonished some with the pertinence of my description, and have given them notice of themselves. By having from my infancy been accustomed to contemplate my own life in that of others, I have acquired a complexion studious in that particular; and when I am once intent upon it, I let few things about me, whether countenances, humours, or discourses, that serve to that purpose, escape me. I study all, both what I am to avoid, and what I am to do. Also in my friends I discover by their productions their inward inclinations; not to range this infinite variety of actions, so diverse and disconnected, into certain sorts and chapters, and distinctly to distribute my parcels and divisions under known heads and classes:—

> Sed neque quam multæ species, et nomina quæ sint,
> Est numerus.[2]

> "But vain the wish, th' imperfect labour vain,
> To rank their various tribes, or name the train."

The learned speak and deliver their fancies more specifically and minutely. I, who see no farther into things than as custom informs me, without rule, present mine generally and conjecturally; as in this, I pronounce my sentence by loose and unknit articles, as of a thing that cannot be spoken at

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, vi. 2. [2] Virgil, *Georgic.* ii. 103.

once and in gross; relation and conformity are not to be found in so low and common souls as ours. Wisdom is a solid and entire building, of which every piece keeps its place and carries its mark: *Sola sapienta in se tota conversa est.*[1] "Wisdom only is wholly turned into itself." I leave it to those who are artists, and I know not whether they will be able to bring it about in so perplexed a thing, to marshal into distinct bodies this infinite diversity of faces, to settle our inconstancy, and set it in order. I do not only find it hard to piece our actions to one another, but I moreover find it very hard properly to design them every one by themselves, by any principal quality, so ambiguous they are and variform by several lights. That which is remarked for rare in Perseus, King of Macedon,[2] "That his mind, fixing itself to no one condition, wandered about in all sorts of living, and represented manners so wild and strange that it was neither known by himself nor any other what kind of man he was," seems almost to fit all the world; and especially I have seen another of his stature, to whom I think this conclusion might still more properly be applied.[3] No moderate settledness; still running headlong from one extreme to another, upon occasions not to be guessed at; no manner of course without traverse and wonderful contrariety; nor simple quality; so that the best guess man can one day make will be, that he affected and studied to make himself known by being not to be known. A man had need have strong ears to hear himself frankly censured; and there being but few that can endure to hear it without being nettled, those who hazard the undertaking it to us manifest a singular effect of friendship; for 'tis to love sincerely indeed to attempt to hurt and offend us for our own good. I think it rude to censure a man whose ill qualities are more than his good ones; Plato requires three things in him that will examine the soul of another, to wit, knowledge, good-will, and boldness.[4]

[1] Cicero, *de Finib.* iii. 7.
[2] See Livy, xli. 20.
[3] The author speaks of himself.
[4] Plato, *Gorgias.*

I have been asked, what I should have thought myself fit for, had any one wished to make use of me, in my younger years:—

> Dum melior vires sanguis dabat, æmula necdum
> Temporibus geminis canebat sparsa senectus:[1]

> "Ere age unstrung my nerves, or time had snowed my head:"

For nothing, said I. And I am willing enough not to know how to do anything that would enslave me to another. But I would have told truths to my master, and had controlled his manners, if he had so pleased; not in gross, by scholastic lessons, which I understand not, and from which I see no true reformation spring in those that do; but by observing them by leisure, at all opportunities, and judging them, an eye witness, one by one, simply and naturally, giving him to understand upon what terms he was in the common opinion, in opposition to his flatterers. There is none of us that would not be worse than kings, if so continually corrupted as they are with that sort of vermin; Alexander, that great king and philosopher, could not defend himself from them. I should have fidelity, judgment, and freedom enough for that. It would be a nameless office, otherwise it would lose both its grace and its effect; and 'tis a part that is not indifferently fit for all men, for truth itself has not the privilege to be spoken at all times, and in all sorts; the use of it, noble as it is, has its circumscriptions and limits. It often falls out, as the world now goes, that a man lets it slip into the ear of a prince, not only to no purpose, but moreover injuriously and unjustly; and no one shall make me believe that a virtuous remonstrance may not be viciously applied, and that the interest of the substance is not often to give place to that of the form.

Montaigne would have been a fit person to talk freely to his sovereign, to tell him truths, and to teach him to know himself.

For such a purpose I would have a man that is content with his own fortune,—

[1] *Æneid*, v. 415.

Quod sit, esse velit; nihilque malit,[1]

"Who likes that present state of his,
And would not be but what he is,"

and but of middling rank, so that on the one hand, he would not be afraid to touch his master's heart to the quick, through fear by that means of losing his preferment; and on the other, being of middling quality, he would have more easy communion with all sorts of people. And I would have this office limited to only one; for to allow the privilege of this liberty and privacy to many, would beget an inconvenient irreverence; and even of that one too, I would, above all things, require the fidelity of silence.

A king is not to be believed when he brags of his constancy in awaiting the shock of the enemy for his glory, if, for his profit and amendment, he cannot stand the freedom of a friend's advice, which has no other power but to pinch his ear, the remainder of its effect being still in his own hands. Now there is no condition of man which stands in so great need of true and free warnings as they do; they sustain a public life, and have to satisfy the opinion of so many spectators that, men having used to conceal from them whatever should divert them from their own way, they insensibly have found themselves involved in the hatred and detestation of their people, sometimes upon such occasions as they might have avoided, without any prejudice even of their pleasures themselves, had they been advised and set right in time. Their favourites, commonly, have more an eye to themselves than to their master; and indeed 'tis to be expected, forasmuch as in truth most of the offices of true friendship, when applied to the sovereign, are under a rude and dangerous proof; so that therein there is great need, not only of very great affection and freedom, but of courage too.

Free advice necessary for kings.

In short, all this hodge-podge that I scribble here, is noth-

[1] Martial, x. 47, 12.

ing but a register of the essays of my life,[1] which for the internal health is exemplary enough to take instruction against the grain; but as to bodily health, no man can furnish out more profitable experience than I, who present it pure, and no way corrupted and changed by art or opinion. Experience is properly upon its own dunghill in the subject of physic, where reason wholly gives it place; Tiberius said that whoever had lived twenty years ought to be responsible to himself for all things that were hurtful or wholesome to him, and know how to order himself without physic;[2] and he might have learnt it of Socrates, who, advising his disciples to be solicitous of their health, as a chief study, added that it was hard if a man of sense, having a care of his exercise and diet, did not better know than any physician, what was good or ill for him.[3] Indeed, physic professes itself always to have experience for the touch of its operations; and Plato had reason to say, that, to be a thorough physician, it would be necessary that he who would take it upon him should first himself have passed through all the diseases he pretends to cure, and through all the accidents and circumstances whereof he is to judge.[4] 'Tis but reason they should get the pox, if they will know how to cure it. For my part I should put myself into such hands; for the others but guide us, like him who paints the sea, rocks, and ports, seated at his table, and there makes the figure of a ship sail in all security; put him to it in earnest, he knows not at which end to begin. They make such a description of our maladies, as a town-crier does of a lost horse or dog; such a colour, such

The advantage that may be derived from Montaigne's Essays for the health of the soul, and much more for that of the body.

[1] "Nam suadere principi, quod oporteat, multi laboris." Tacit. *Hist.* i. 15.

[2] Montaigne here probably had in his mind Tacitus (*Annal.* vi. 46), where the historian, speaking of Tiberius, says: "Solitusque eludere medicorum artes, atque eos, post tricesimum ætatis annum, ad internoscenda corporis suo utilia, vel noxia, alieni consilii indigerent." Suetonius (*Life of Tiberius*, c. 28,) only says that Tiberius after he was 30 years of age, governed his health after his own fancy, and without the help and advice of physicians. And Plutarch tells us in his treatise *Of the Rules and Precepts for Health*, that he remembered to have heard that Tiberius used to say, that the man who after threescore years of age held his hand out to a physician to feel his pulse, deserved to be laughed at for a fool."

[3] Xenophon, *Mem. on Socrates*, iv 7, 9

[4] Plato, *Republic*, iii.

a height, such an ear; but bring him to him, and he knows it not for all that. God grant that physic may one day give me some good and visible relief, to see how I shall cry out in good earnest,—

Tandem efficaci do manus scientiæ.[1]

"At length I own the power of the pill."

The arts that promise to keep our bodies and souls in health, promise a great deal; but withal, there is none that less keep their promise. And, in our times, those that make profession of these arts amongst us, less manifest the effects than any other sort of men; one may say of them, at the most, that they sell medicinal drugs, but that they are physicians one cannot say. I have lived long enough to be able to give an account of the usage that has carried me so far; for whoever has a mind to read it, as his taster, I give him an essay. Here are some articles as my memory shall supply me with them; I have no custom that has not varied according to accidents; but I only record those that I have been best acquainted with, and that hitherto have had the greatest possession of me.

Montaigne's course of life the same in sickness as in health.

My form of life is the same in sickness that it is in health; the same bed, the same hours, the same meat, and the same drink, serve me in both conditions alike; I add nothing to them but the moderation of more or less, according to my strength and appetite. My health consists in maintaining my wonted state without disturbance. I see that sickness puts me off it on one side, if I will be ruled by the physicians, they will put me off on the other; so that by fortune and by art I am altogether displaced. I believe nothing more certainly than this, that I cannot be hurt by the use of things to which I have been so long accustomed. 'Tis for custom to give a form to a man's life, such as it pleases; in that she is all in all; 'tis the cup of Circe that varies our nature as she likes. How many nations, and but three steps from us, think the fear of the

[1] Horace, *Epod.* xvii. i.

dew, that so manifestly is hurtful to us, a ridiculous fancy, and our watermen and peasants despise it. You make a German sick if you lay him upon a mattress, as you do an Italian if you lay him upon a feather-bed, and a Frenchman without curtains or fire. A Spanish stomach cannot endure our form of eating, nor ours to drink like the Swiss. A German made me very merry at Augusta,[1] with disputing the convenience of our hearths, by the same arguments which we commonly make use of in decrying their stoves; for, to say the truth, that smothered heat, and then the scent of that heated matter of which the fire is composed, gets into the head of such as are not used to them, though not into mine; but as to the rest, the heat being always equal, constant and universal, without flame, without smoke, and without the wind that comes down our chimneys, they may in many ways endure comparison with ours. Why do we not imitate the Roman architecture? For they say that anciently fires were not made in their houses, but on the outside, and at the foot of them; whence the heat was conveyed to the whole fabric by pipes contrived in the wall, which went twining about the places that were to be warmed; which I have seen plainly described somewhere in Seneca.[2] This gentleman, hearing me commend the conveniences and beauties of his city, which truly deserves it, began to pity me that I had to go away; and the first inconvenience he alleged to me was, the heaviness in the head that the chimneys elsewhere would bring upon me. He had heard some one make this complaint, and fixed it upon us, being by custom deprived of the opportunity of perceiving it at home. All heat that comes from the fire makes me weak and dull, and yet Evenus said that fire was the best condiment of life.[3] I rather choose any other way of making myself warm.

We are afraid to drink our wines when towards the bottom

[1] Augsburgh (Augusta Vindelicorum) through which Montaigne passed on his way to Italy, in October, 1580. He does not mention this discourse about stoves and chimneys in his Journey.

[2] *Epist.* 90.

[3] Plutarch, *Platonic Questions.*

of a vessel; in Portugal, this is thought delicious, and it is the beverage of princes. In fine, every nation has several modes and customs, that are not only unknown, but would seem savage and miraculous to others. What should we do with those people who admit of no testimonies, if not printed, who believe not men if not in a book, not truth herself, if not of competent age? We dignify our nonsense when we commit it to the press. 'Tis of a great deal more weight to what you speak of, to say: "I have read such thing," than if you only say: "I have heard such a thing." But I, who no more disbelieve a man's mouth than his pen, and who know that men write as indiscreetly as they speak, and who esteem this age as much as one that's past, do as soon quote a friend I know as Aulus Gellius or Macrobius, and what I have seen, as what they have written; and as they held of virtue, that it is not greater for having continued longer, so do I hold of truth, that for being older it is not wiser. I often say that it is mere folly that makes us run after foreign and scholastic examples; their fertility is the same now that it was in the time of Homer and Plato. But is it not that we seek more the honour of the quotation, than the truth of the discourse? as if it were more to borrow our proofs from the shops of Vascosan or of Plantin, than from what is to be seen in our own village; or else, indeed, that we have not the wit to cull out and make useful what we see before us, and judge of it vividly enough to draw it into example; for if we say that we want authority to procure faith to our testimony, we speak from the purpose; forasmuch as, in my opinion, of the most ordinary, common, and known things, could we but find out their light, the greatest miracles of nature might be formed, and the most wonderful examples, especially upon the subject of human actions.

Now, upon this subject I am speaking of, setting aside the examples I have gathered from books, and what Aristotle says[1] of Andro the Argian, that he travelled over the arid

[1] Laertius, *Life of Pyrrho*, iv. 81.

sands of Libya without drinking; a gentleman who has behaved himself well in several employments, said, in a place where I was, that he had rid from Madrid to Lisbon in the heat of summer, without drinking. He is very healthy and vigorous for his age, and has nothing extraordinary in his course and method of living but this, to live sometimes two or three months, nay, a whole year, without drinking. He is sometimes dry, but he lets his drought pass over, and holds it an appetite which easily goes of itself; he drinks more out of caprice, than either for need or pleasure.

Here is another example: 'tis not long ago that I met one of the learnedest men in France, among those of the greatest fortune, studying in a corner of a hall that they had separated for him with tapestry, and about him a rabble of his servants, full of noise. He told me, and Seneca almost says the same of himself,[1] he made an advantage of this hubbub; as if, beaten with this rattle, he so much the more collected and retired himself into himself for contemplation, and that this tempest of voices drove back his thoughts within himself. When a scholar at Padua, he had his study so long situated in the rattle of coaches, and the tumult of the public place, that he not only formed himself to the contempt, but even to the use of noise, for the service of his studies. Socrates answered Alcibiades, who being astonished at his patience, asked him how he could endure the perpetual scolding of his wife: "Why," said he, "as those do who are accustomed to the ordinary noise of wheels to draw water."[2] I am quite otherwise; I have a tender head, and easily discomposed; when 'tis bent upon anything, the least buzzing of a fly tears it into pieces.

Seneca, in his youth, having, by the example of Sextus, put on a positive resolution of eating nothing that had received death, passed over a whole year without it, and, as he said, with pleasure,[3] and only left off that he might not be

[1] *Epist.* 56.
[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*, ii. 36.
[3] *Epist.* 108.

suspected of taking up this rule from some new religions, by which it was prescribed. He took up withal, from the precepts of Attalus, a custom, not to lie any more upon any sort of bedding that yielded under a man's weight, and even to his old age made use of such as would not yield to any pressure. What the custom of his time made him account austerity, that of ours makes us look upon as effeminacy.

Do but observe the difference betwixt the way of living of my labourers and mine; Scythia and the Indies have nothing more remote both from my force and method. I have picked up boys from begging to serve me, who soon after have quitted both my kitchen and livery, only that they might return to their former course of life; and I found one afterwards picking up mussels in our neighbourhood for his dinner, whom I could neither by entreaties nor threats reclaim from the sweetness he found in indigence. Beggars have their magnificences and delights as well as the rich; and, 'tis said, their dignities and orders. These are the effects of custom; she can mould us not only into what form she pleases (and yet the sages say[1] we ought to apply ourselves to the best, which she would soon make easy to us), but also to change and variation, which is the most noble and most useful of her apprenticeships. The best of my bodily attributes is that I am flexible, and very little obstinate; I have inclinations more proper and ordinary, and more agreeable than others; but I am diverted from them with very little struggle, and easily slip into a contrary course. A young man ought to cross his own rules, to awake his vigour, and to keep it from growing faint and rusty; and there is no course of life so weak and foolish as that which is carried on by rule and discipline:—

> Ad primum lapidem vectari cum placet, hora
> Sumitur ex libro; si prurit frictus ocelli
> Angulus, inspectâ genesi, collyria quærit:[2]

> "If he but walk a mile he first must look
> For the fit hour and minute in the book.

[1] *Pythagoras*, in Stobæus, *Serm.* 29

[2] Juvenal, vi. 576.

If his eye itch, the pain will still endure,
Nor till a scheme be raised, apply the cure:"

he shall often throw himself even into excesses, if he will take my advice; otherwise the least debauch will ruin him, and he will render himself uneasy and disagreeable in company. The worst quality in a gentleman is delicateness, and an obligation to a certain particular way; and it is particular, if not pliable and supple. It is a kind of reproach not to be able, or not to dare, to do what we see others do before us; let such as these sit at home. It is in every man unbecoming; but in a soldier it is vicious and intolerable; who, as Philopœmen said,[1] ought to accustom himself to all variety and inequality of life.

The customs to which Montaigne was a slave in his old age.

Though I have been brought up as much as possible, to liberty and indifference, yet so it is that having, in growing old, more settled upon certain forms (my age is now past instruction, and I have henceforward nothing to do but to keep it up as well as I can), custom has already, ere I was aware, so imprinted its character in me, in certain things, that I look upon it as a kind of excess to leave them off; and, without a force upon myself, I cannot sleep in the daytime, nor eat between meals, nor breakfast, nor go to bed, without a great interval betwixt eating and sleeping, as of three good hours after supper; nor get children but before I sleep, and never standing upon my feet, nor endure my own sweat, nor quench my thirst either with pure water or pure wine, nor keep my head long bare, nor have my hair cut after dinner; and I should be as uneasy without my gloves as without my shirt, or without washing when I rise from table, or get out of bed; and could not lie without a canopy and curtains, as if these were all-essential things. I could dine without a tablecloth, but without a clean napkin, after the German fashion, very incommodiously; I soil them more than they or the Italians do, and make but little use either of spoon or fork. I am sorry that

[1] Or rather, *as it was said to Philopœmen.* See Plutarch, *in Vitâ.*

the same is not in use amongst us, that I see the example of in kings; which is to change our napkins at every service, as they do our plates. We are told of that laborious soldier Marius, that, growing old, he became nice in his drinking, and never drank but out of a particular cup of his own;[1] I, in like manner, have suffered myself to fancy a certain form of glasses, and do not willingly drink in a common glass, no more than from a common hand; all metal offends me in comparison of a clear and transparent matter; let my eyes taste too, according to their capacity. I owe several other such niceties to custom. Nature has also, on the other hand, helped me to some of hers; as not to be able to endure two full meals in one day without overcharging my stomach, nor a total abstinence from one of those meals, without filling myself with wind, drying up my mouth, and dulling my appetite; as finding great inconvenience from much evening air; for of late years, in night marches, which often happen to be all night long, after five or six hours my stomach begins to be queasy, with a violent pain in my head, so that I always vomit before the day breaks. When others go to breakfast, I go to sleep, and when I rise I am as brisk and gay as before. I had always been told that the evening dew never spread itself but at the beginning of the night; but for some years past, long and familiarly frequenting a lord possessed with this opinion, that the dew is more sharp and dangerous about the declining of the sun, an hour or two before he sets, which he carefully avoids, and despises that of the night; he has almost imprinted in me not only his reasoning, but his opinion. What, shall doubt itself and inquiry strike our imagination, and change us? Such as absolutely and on a sudden give way to these propensions, totally ruin themselves; and I am grieved for several gentlemen who, through the folly of their physicians, have in their youth and health put themselves into consumptions; it were yet better to endure a cold, than, by disuse, forever to lose the commerce

[1] Plutarch, *How we should restrain Anger.*

of common life, in an action of so great use. Ill-natured science, to interdict us the sweetest and most pleasant hours of the day! Let us keep possession of it to the last; for the most part a man hardens himself by being obstinate, and corrects his constitution, as Cæsar did the falling sickness, by dint of contempt.[1] A man should addict himself to the best rules, but not enslave himself to them; except not to such, if there be any such, the obligation and servitude to which are of profit.

The care that Montaigne took to keep his body open.

Both kings and philosophers go to stool, and ladies too; public lives are bound to ceremony, mine, that is obscure and private, enjoys all natural dispensation; soldier and Gascon are also qualities a little subject to indiscretion; wherefore I shall say of this action, that it is necessary to refer it to certain prescribed and nocturnal hours, and force a man's self to it by custom, as I have done; but not to subject himself, as has been my practice in my declining years, to a particular convenience of place and seat for this purpose, and making it troublesome by long sitting; and yet, foul offices, is it not in some measure excusable to require more care and cleanliness? *Naturâ homo mundum et elegans animal est;*[2] "Man is by nature a clean and delicate creature." Of all the actions of nature, I am the most impatient of being interrupted in that. I have seen many soldiers troubled with the unruliness of their stomachs; whilst mine and I never fail of our punctual assignation, which is at leaping out of bed, if some indispensable business or sickness do not interfere with us.

The surest course to be taken by valetudinarians.

I do not then think, as I said before, that sick men can better place themselves anywhere in safety, than in keeping quietly in that course of life wherein they have been bred and trained up; alteration, be it what it will, distempers and confuses them. Chestnuts will never hurt a Perigordian, or one of Lucca; or milk and cheese the inhabitants of the mountains. People

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ.* [2] Seneca, *Epist.* 92.

are ordered not only a new, but a contrary method of life, a change that the most healthful cannot endure. Prescribe water to a Breton of threescore and ten, shut a seaman up in a stove, and forbid a Basque footman walking; you will deprive them of motion, and in the end of air and light.

> An vivere tanti est?
>
> Cogimur a suetis animum suspendere rebus,
> Atque, ut vivamus, vivere desinimus . . .
> Hos superesse reor, quibus et spirabilis aer,
> Et lux, quâ regimur, redditur ipsa gravis?[1]
>
> "Is life of such a mighty consequence?
> Must we accustom'd things quite over give,
> And cease to live, that we may longer live?
> Surely their life they once for all must leave,
> Whom light and air, by which they live, do grieve."

If they do no other good, they do this at least, that they prepare the patients betimes for death, by little and little undermining and cutting off the use of life.

Montaigne, whether well or sick, indulged his natural appetites.

Both well and sick I have ever willingly suffered myself to obey the appetites that pressed upon me. I give great authority to my inclinations and desires; I do not love to cure one disease by another; I hate remedies that are more troublesome than the disease itself. To be subject to the stone, and subject to abstain from eating oysters, are two evils instead of one; the disease torments us on the one side, and the remedy on the other. Since we ever run the hazard of mistaking, let us run it as a consequence of pleasure. The world proceeds quite contrary, and thinks nothing profitable that is not painful; facility stands suspected. My appetite is in several things of itself happily enough accommodated to the health of my stomach; high-flavoured sauces were pleasant to me when young, but my stomach disliking them afterwards, my taste incontinently did the same; wine is hurtful to sick people;

[1] Pseudo-Gall. *Eleg.* i. 155, 247. The words, *An vivere tanti est*, are not in the text.

and 'tis the first thing that my mouth disrelishes when I am sick, and with an invincible distaste. Whatever I take against my liking does me harm, and nothing hurts me that I eat with appetite and pleasure. I never received harm by any action that was very agreeable to me; and accordingly I have made all medicinal conclusions mightily give way to my pleasure; and I have, when I was young,—

> Quem circumcursans huc atque huc sæpe Cupido
> Fulgebat crocinâ splendidus in tunicâ,[1]

> "Whilst Cupid round me fluttering did fly,
> In his rich mantle of the Tyrian dye,"

given myself the reins as freely and inconsiderately as any other whatever to the desire that was predominant in me;

> Et militavi non sine gloriâ,[2]

> "And in the field of Love have honour won;"

yet more in continuation and holding out, than in sally:—

> Sex me vix memini sustinuisse vices.[3]

'Tis certainly a misfortune and a miracle at once, to confess at what a tender age I was subjected to love. It was indeed by chance; for it was long before the years of choice or discretion. I do not remember myself so long ago; and my fortune may very well be coupled to that of Quartilla, who could not remember the time she was a maid.[4]

> Inde tragus, celeresque pili, mirandaque matri
> Barba meæ.[5]

> "My early budding beard my friends amazed."

Physicians commonly submit their rules to the violent longings that happen to sick persons, with very good success.

[1] Catullus, *Carm.* lxvi. 133.
[2] Horace, *Od.* iii. 26, 2.
[3] Ovid, *Amor.* iii. 7. 26. Some very curious inquirers will blame me for not having explained this little verse; and there are others, whom I rather wish to keep fair with, would give me a rap on the knuckles if I had. All I can do to oblige the first, is to refer them to Fontaine's tale called *Le Berceau*, verse 246.
[4] Petronius, c. 25.
[5] Martial, xi. 22, 7.

This great desire, so strange and vicious, cannot be imagined to be, but that nature must have a hand in it. And then how easy a thing is it to satisfy the fancy? In my opinion, this part wholly carries it, at least, above all the rest. The most grievous and ordinary wills are those that fancy loads us with. This Spanish saying mightily pleases in several points of view: *Defienda me Dios de my.* "God defend me from myself." I am sorry, when I am sick, that I have not some longing that might give me the contentment of satisfying it; all the rules of physic would hardly be able to divert me from it. I do the same when I am well, I see very little more than to wish and to will. 'Tis pity a man should be so weak and languishing, that he can't even wish.

The uncertainty of physic gives a sanction to most of our longings.

The art of physic is not so resolved that we need be without authority for whatever we do; it changes according to the climates and moons, according to Fernel and according to L'Escale.[1] If your physician does not think it good for you to sleep, to drink wine, or to eat such and such meats, never trouble yourself; I will find you another that shall not be of his opinion. The diversity of physical arguments and opinions embraces all sorts of methods. I saw a miserable sick man panting and burning with thirst, that he might be cured, who was afterwards laughed at for his pains by another physician, who condemned that advice as prejudicial to him. Had he not tormented himself to good purpose? A man of that profession is lately dead of the stone, who had made use of extreme abstinence to contend with his disease. His fellow physicians said that, on the contrary, this abstinence from drink had dried his body up and baked the gravel in his bladder.

I have observed that, both in wounds and sickness, speak-

[1] Fernel, physician to Henry II., born 1497, died 1558. L'Escale, better known as J. C. Scaliger, one of the greatest scholars of that age. No one was at this period accredited as a learned man, who did not give some Greek or Latin turn to his real name. Fernel became *Fernelius;* L'Escale, *Scaliger;* Tournebu, *Turnebus;* Budé, *Budæus;* Filandrier, *Philander;* Casaubon, *Hortibonus*, or *Hortusbonus;* Schwartzerde, *Melancthon* (μελαινα χθων.) Sans-Malice, physician to Francis I., took the Greek appellation *Akakia;* and, later, Van der Beken called himself *Torrentius*, &c. &c.

Talking hurtful to Montaigne in his sickness.

ing discomposes and hurts me as much as any disorder I can commit. My voice spends and tires me, for 'tis loud and high; so that when I have gone to whisper some great person about an affair of consequence, they have often had to moderate my voice.

This story deserves a place here. Some one,[1] in a certain Greek school, was speaking loud, as I do; the master of the ceremonies sent to him to speak lower. "Tell him then he must send me," replied the other, "the tone he would have me speak in." To which the other replied, "That he should take the tone from the ear of him to whom he spake." It was well said, if it be understood: "Speak according to the affair you are speaking about to your auditor;" for if it mean, "'tis sufficient that he hears you, or, govern yourself by him," I do not find it to be reason. The tone and motion of my voice carries with it a great deal of the expression and signification of my meaning, and 'tis I who am to govern it, to make myself understood. There is a voice to instruct, a voice to flatter, and a voice to reprehend. I would not only have my voice reach my hearer, but, peradventure, that it strike and pierce him. When I rattle my footman in a sharp and bitter tone, it would be very fine for him to say, "Pray, master, speak lower, I hear you very well." *Est quædam vox ad auditum accommodata, non magnitudine, sed proprietate.*[2] "There is a certain voice accommodated to the hearing, not by the loudness, but by its propriety." Speaking is half his that speaks, and half his that hears; the last ought to prepare himself to receive it, according to its motion, as with tennis players; he that receives the ball, shifts, draws back, and prepares himself, according as he sees him move who strikes the stroke, and according to the stroke itself.

Distempers have their periods, which we must wait for with patience.

Experience has moreover taught me this, that we damage ourselves by impatience. Evils have their life and limits, their diseases and their recovery. The constitution of maladies is formed after

[1] *Carneades.* See Laertius, *in Vitâ.*

[2] Quintil. xi. 3.

the pattern of the constitution of animals; they have their fortunes and days limited from their birth. Whoever attempts imperiously to cut them short by force in the middle of their course, lengthens and multiplies them, and incenses instead of appeasing them. I am of Crantor's opinion, "that we are neither obstinately and wilfully to oppose maladies, nor to truckle to them for want of courage; but that we are naturally to give way to them, according to their condition and our own." We ought to grant free passage to diseases, and I find they stay less with me, who let them alone, and I have lost those which are reputed the most tenacious and obstinate, by their own decay, without any help or art, and contrary to rule. Let us a little permit nature to take her own way; she better understands her own affairs than we. "But such a one died:—" and so will you, if not of that disease, of another; and how many have not escaped dying who have had three physicians always at their tails? Example is a vague and universal mirror, and has all aspects. If it be a pleasant medicine, take it; 'tis always so much present good. I will never stick at the name or the colour, if it be grateful to the palate; pleasure is one of the chief kinds of profit. I have suffered colds, gouty defluxions, relaxations, palpitations of the heart, megrims, and other accidents, to grow old and die in me a natural death, which I have been rid of when I was half prepared to nourish and keep them. They are sooner prevailed upon by courtesy than by huffing. We must patiently suffer the laws of our condition; we are born to grow old, to grow weak, and to be sick, in spite of all physic. 'Tis the first lesson the Mexicans teach their children; so soon as ever they are born, they thus salute them: "Child, thou art come into the world to endure, suffer, and say nothing." 'Tis injustice to lament that that has befallen any one, which may befall every one: *Indignare, si quid in te inique proprie constitutum est.*[1] "Be angry when there is anything unjustly decreed against thee alone."

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 91

Take an old man begging of God Almighty that he will maintain his health vigorous and entire, that is to say, that he will restore him to youth :—

> Stulte, quid hæc frustra votis puerilibus optas?[1]
>
> "Why pray'st thou, fool, such childish prayers in vain?"

is it not folly? his condition is not capable of it. The gout, the stone, indigestion, are symptoms of long years, as heat, rains, and winds of long voyages. Plato[2] does not believe that Æsculapius troubled himself to seek, by regimen, to prolong life in a weak and wasted body, useless to his country and to his profession, and to beget healthful and robust children; and does not think such solicitude suitable to the divine justice and prudence, which is to direct all things to utility. My good friend, your business is done; nobody can restore you; they can at the most but patch you up, and prop you a little, and prolong your misery an hour or two :—

> Non secus instantem cupiens fulcire ruinam,
> Diversis contra nititur objicibus;
> Donec certa dies, omni compage solutâ,
> Ipsum cum rebus subruat auxilium:[3]
>
> "Like one who, willing to defer awhile
> A sudden ruin, props the tottering pile,
> Till in short space the house, the props and all
> Together with a dreadful havoc fall."

We must learn to suffer what we cannot avoid. Our life, like the harmony of the world, is composed of contrary things, of various tones, sweet and harsh, sharp and flat, sprightly and solemn. And the musician who should only affect one of these, what would he be able to do? He must know how to make use of them all, and to mix them; and so we likewise, the good and evil, which are consubstantial with life. Our being cannot subsist without this mixture, and the one is no less necessary to it than the other. To attempt to

[1] Ovid, *Trist.* iii. 8, 11.
[2] *Republic*, iii.
[3] Pseudo-Gallus, i. 171.

kick against natural necessity, is to represent the folly of Ctesiphon, who undertook to out-kick his mule.[1]

Why Montaigne avoided to consult physicians.

I consult little about the alterations I feel; for those people take advantage when they have you at their mercy. They stun your ears with their prognostics, and having once formerly surprised me, weakened with sickness, injuriously handled me with their dogmas and magisterial fopperies; one while menacing me with great pains; and another with approaching death. By this I was indeed moved and shaken, but not subdued nor jostled from my place. Though my judgment was neither altered nor distracted, yet it was at least disturbed; 'tis always agitation and combat.

He loved to flatter his imagination in his illness.

Now I use my imagination as gently as I can, and would discharge it of all trouble and contest, if I could. A man must assist, flatter, and deceive it if he can. My mind is fit for that office; it wants no appearances throughout. And, could it persuade as it preaches, it would successfully relieve me. Will you have an example? It tells me, "that 'tis for my good to have the stone; that the buildings of my age are naturally to suffer some decay; that it is now time they should begin to disjoint. 'Tis a common necessity, and I could not expect a miracle to be performed in my favour; I therein pay what is due to old age, and I cannot expect a better bargain. That company ought to comfort me, being fallen into the most common infirmity of my time. I see everywhere men tormented with the same disease, and am honoured by the fellowship, forasmuch as men of the best quality are most frequently afflicted with it; 'tis a noble and dignified disease. That of such as are pestered with it, few have it to a less degree of pain, and while others are put to the trouble of a strict diet, and the daily taking of nauseous drugs and potions, I owe my good intervals purely to my good fortune. For some ordinary broths of Eringo's,

The stone ordinary in old men, especially men of quality.

[1] Plutarch, *How we should restrain Anger.*

or burst-wort, that I have twice or thrice taken to oblige ladies, who, with kindness greater than my pain, would needs present me half of theirs, seemed to me equally easy to take, and fruitless in operation. They are to pay a thousand vows to Æsculapius, and as many crowns to their physician, for the voiding a little gravel, which I often do by the benefit of nature. Even the decency of my countenance is not disturbed by it in company, and I can hold my water ten hours, and as long as any man that is in health. "The fear of this disease," it says, "did formerly affright thee, when it was unknown to thee; the cries and despair of those that make it worse by their impatience begot a horror in thee. 'Tis a malady that punishes the members by which thou hast most offended. Thou art a conscientious fellow,—

Quæ venit indigne pæna, dolenda venit:[1]

'To guiltless suff'rers our regret is due:'

"consider this chastisement; 'tis very easy in comparison with that of others, and inflicted with a paternal tenderness. Do but observe how late it came; it only seizes on and incommodes that part of thy life which is, as it were, sterile and lost, having, as it were by compact, given full room to the license and pleasures of thy youth. The fear and the compassion that people have of this disease serves thee for matter of glory, a quality whereof, if thou hast thy own judgment purified, and if thy reason is therein right and sound, yet thy friends will notwithstanding discover some tincture in thy complexion. 'Tis a pleasure to hear it said of one's self: 'Here is great force, here is great patience.' Thou art seen to sweat with pain, to look pale and red, to tremble, to vomit well nigh to blood, to suffer strange contractions and convulsions, by starts to let tears drop from thine eyes, to urine thick, black, and frightful water, or to have it suppressed by some sharp and craggy stone, that cruelly pricks and tears thee, whilst all the while thou entertainest the company with

[1] Ovid, *Heroid.* v. 8.

an ordinary countenance, drolling by fits with thy people, making one in a continued discourse, now and then excusing thy pain, and making thy sufferance less than it is. Dost thou call to mind the men of past times, who so greedily sought diseases to keep their virtue in breath and exercise? Put the case that nature forced, and led thee on to this glorious schooling, into which thou wouldst never have entered of thy own freewill. If thou tellest me that it is a dangerous and mortal disease, what others are not? For 'tis a physician's cheat to except any, and to say, that they do not go directly to death; what matter is it, if they tend that way by accident, or if they slide and slip into the path that leads to it? But thou dost not die because thou art sick, thou diest because thou art living. Death kills thee without the help of sickness, and in some, sickness has deferred death, who have lived longer by reason of that they thought themselves dying withal. To which may be added that, as there are wounds, so there are diseases, medicinal and wholesome. The stone is often no less long-lived than you. We see men with whom it has continued from their infancy, even to an extreme old age, and if they had not broken company, it would have gone on with them longer still. You oftener kill it than it kills you. And though it presented you the image of approaching death, were it not a good office to a man of such an age, to put him in mind of his end? And, which is worse, thou hast no longer anything that should make thee desire to be cured. From the first day, common necessity calls thee away. Do but consider how artificially and gently she puts thee out of taste with life, and weans thee from the world; not forcing and compelling thee with a tyrannical subjection, like so many other infirmities which thou seest old men afflicted withal, that hold them in continual torment, and keep them in perpetual, unintermitted pains and dolours, but by warnings and instructions at intervals, intermixing long pauses of repose, as it were, to give thee leave to meditate upon and repeat her lesson at thy own

ease and leisure. To give thee means to judge aright, and to assume the resolution of a man of courage, she presents to thee the entire state of thy condition, both in good and evil, and one while a very cheerful, and another an insupportable life, in one and the same day. If thou embracest not death, at least thou shakest hands with it once a month; by which thou hast the more cause to hope that it will one day surprise thee without warning, and that being so often conducted to the water-side, and thinking thyself to be still upon the accustomed terms, thou and thy confidence will at one time or another be unexpectedly wafted over.[1] A man cannot reasonably complain of diseases that fairly divide the time with health."

I am obliged to fortune for having so often assaulted me with the same sort of weapons; she forms and fashions me thereto, hardens and habituates me by custom; I know within a little for how much I shall be quit. For want of natural memory, I make one of paper, and as any new symptom happens in my disease, I set it down; whence it falls out that, having now passed through almost all sorts of examples, if any surprise threatens me, tumbling over these little loose notes, as sibyl's leaves, I never fail of finding matter of consolation from some favourable prognostic in my past experience.[2] Custom also makes me hope better for the time to come; for the conduct of this evacuation having so long continued, 'tis to be believed that nature will not alter her course, and that no other worse accident will happen than what I already feel. And besides, the condition of this disease is not unsuitable to my prompt and sudden complexion; when it assaults me gently, I am afraid, for 'tis then for a great while; but it has naturally brisk and vigorous attacks. It claws me to purpose for a day or two. My reins held out an age without alteration, and I have almost now lived

[1] An allusion to what was fabled by the ancient Greeks and Romans, that the dead were transported over the river Styx in Charon's ferry-boat.

[2] It is these *little notes* which partly constitute the Journey through Italy. His visits to the mineral waters of Lorraine, Switzerland, and Tuscany, were principally occasioned by the stone, with which he was afflicted.

another since they changed their state; ills have their periods as well as good; perhaps the infirmity draws towards an end. Age weakens the heat of my stomach, the digestion of which being less perfect, it sends this crude matter to my reins; why, at a certain revolution, may not the heat of my reins be also abated, so that they can no more petrify my phlegm, and nature find out some other way of purgation? Years have evidently helped me to drain certain rheums; and why not those excrements which furnish matter for gravel? But is there anything so sweet as the sudden change, when from an excessive pain, I come, by the voiding of a stone, to recover, as from a flash of lightning, the beautiful light of health, so free and full, as it happens in our sudden and most sharp colics? Is there anything in the pain suffered, that a man can counterpoise to the pleasure of so sudden an amendment? O, how much does health seem the more pleasant to me after sickness, so near and contiguous that I can distinguish them in the presence of one another in their greatest height, where they present themselves in emulation, as if to make head against and to dispute it with one another! As the Stoics say, that the vices are profitably introduced, to give value to and set off virtue;[1] we can with better reason, and less temerity of conjecture, say of nature, that she has given us pain for the honour and service of pleasure and ease. When Socrates, after his fetters were knocked off, felt the pleasure of that itching which the weight of them had caused in his legs, he rejoiced to consider the strict alliance betwixt pain and pleasure; how they are linked together by a necessary connection, so that by turns they follow and mutually beget one another; and cried out to the good fellow Æsop, that he ought, out of his consideration, to have taken the materials proper for a fine fable.[2]

Health more pleasant after sickness.

The worst that I see in other diseases is that they are not

1 Plutarch, *On the Common Conceptions against the Stoics.*

2 Plato, *Phædo*

so grievous in their effect as they are in their result; a man is a whole year recovering, and all the while full of weakness and fear. There is so much hazard, and so many steps to arrive at safety, that one has never done. Before they have unmuffled you of a wrapper, and then a cap, before they allow you to walk abroad and take the air, to drink wine, lie with your wife, or eat melons, 'tis odds but you relapse into some new distemper. The stone has this privilege, that it carries itself clean off; whereas other maladies always leave behind them some impression and alteration, that renders the body subject to some new disease, lending a hand to one another. Those are excusable that content themselves with possessing us, without extending it farther, and introducing others to succeed them; but courteous and kind are those whose passage brings us any profitable issue. Since I have been troubled with the stone, I find myself free from all other accidents; much more, methinks, than I was before, and have never had any fever since. I argue that the extreme and frequent vomitings that I am subject to, purge me; and, on the other side, my distastes, and the strange fasts I keep, digest my peccant humours; and nature in those stones voids whatever there is in me of superfluous and hurtful. Let them never tell me that it is a medicine too dear bought; for what are so many stinking potions, caustics, incisions, sweats, setons, diets, and so many other methods of cure, which often, by reason we are not able to undergo their violence and importunity, bring us to our graves? So that when I am ill I look upon it as physic; when well, for an absolute deliverance.

The advantage of the stone above all other distempers.

And here is another particular benefit of my disease; which is, that it most plays its game by itself, and lets me play mine, or else I only want courage to do it; for in its greatest fury I have endured it ten hours together on horseback. Do but endure it, you need no other regimen; play, dine, run, do this and do that, if you can; your excess will do you more good than harm; say as much to one that has

the pox, the gout, or hernia. The other diseases have more universal obligations, rack all our actions after another kind of manner, disturb our whole order, and to their consideration engage the whole state of life; this only pinches the skin; it leaves the understanding and will wholly at our disposal, and the tongue, hands, and feet; it rather awakens than stupefies you. The soul is over-excited with the ardour of a fever, prostrated with the epilepsy, and displaced by a sharp megrim, and, in short, astounded by all the diseases that hurt the whole mass, and the most noble parts. This never meddles with the soul; if anything goes amiss with her, 'tis her own fault; she betrays, dismounts, and abandons herself. 'Tis only fools who suffer themselves to be persuaded that this hard and massy body, which is baked in our reins, is to be dissolved by drinks; wherefore, when it is once stirred, there is nothing to be done but to give it passage; it will take it of itself.

I moreover observe this particular convenience in it, that it is a disease wherein we have little to guess at; we are dispensed from the trouble into which other diseases throw us by the incertainty of their causes, conditions, and progress; a trouble that is infinitely painful; we have no need of consultation and doctoral interpretations; the senses well enough inform us what it is and where it is.

By such-like arguments, weak and strong, as Cicero[1] did the disease of his old age, I try to rock asleep and amuse my imagination, and to dress its wounds. If I find them worse to-morrow, I will provide new remedies and applications. To show that this is true: I am come to that pass of late, that the least motion forces pure blood out of my reins; what of that? I stir, nevertheless as before, and ride after my hounds with a juvenile and reckless ardour, and find that I have a very good bargain in a malady of that importance, when it costs me no more than a little heaviness and uneasiness in that part; 'tis some great stone that wastes and consumes the

[1] *De Senectute.*

substance of my kidneys and of my life, which I by little and little evacuate, not without some natural pleasure, as an excrement henceforward superfluous and troublesome. Now, if I feel anything to roll and stir, do not expect that I should trouble myself to consult my pulse, or my urine, in order to find there some vexatious sign; I shall soon enough feel the pain, without making it more and longer by the disease of fear. Who fears to suffer, already suffers what he fears; to which may be added, that the doubts and ignorance of those who take upon them to expound the springs of nature, and her internal progressions, and the many false prognostics of their art, ought to give us to understand that her ways are inscrutable and utterly unknown; there is great uncertainty, variety, and obscurity in all that she either promises or threatens. Old age excepted, which is an indubitable sign of the approach of death; in all other mishaps I see few signs of the future, whereon we may ground our divination. I only judge of myself by my real senses, and not by reason. To what end? since I am resolved to bring nothing to it but expectation and patience. Will you know how much I get by this? Observe those that do otherwise, and who rely upon so many divers persuasions and counsels; how often and how much they labour under imagination, without any bodily pain at all. I have many times amused myself, being well and in safety, and delivered from these dangerous ills, by describing them to the physicians, as but then beginning to discover themselves in me; undergoing the sentence of their dreadful conclusions very much at my ease; and so much the more obliged to the favour of God, and better satisfied of the vanity of this art.

There is nothing that ought so much to be recommended to youth as activity and vigilance; our life is nothing but motion; I move with great difficulty, and am slow in everything; in rising, going to bed, or eating; seven of the clock in the morning is early for me; and where I govern I never dine before eleven, nor sup till after

Montaigne a great sleeper.

six. I have formerly attributed the cause of the fevers and other diseases I have fallen into, to the heaviness that long sleeping had brought upon me, and have ever repented going to sleep again in the morning. Plato is more angry at the excess of sleeping, than at that of drinking.[1] I love to lie hard and alone, even without my wife, as kings do; well covered with clothes. They never warm my bed; but, since I've grown old, they give me at need warm clothes to lay to my feet and stomach. They find fault with the great Scipio, that he was a heavy sleeper; and, in my opinion, for no other reason but that men were displeased that he alone should have nothing in him to be found fault withal. If I have anything curious in my way of living, 'tis rather in my lying than anything else; but generally I give way and accommodate myself as much as any one to necessity. Sleep has taken up a great part of my life, and I yet continue, at the age I now am, to sleep eight or nine hours together. I wean myself, to my advantage, from this propensity to sloth, and am evidently better for so doing. I find the change a little hard indeed, but in three days 'tis over, and I see but few that live with less sleep when need requires, and that more constantly exercise themselves, nor to whom long journeys are less troublesome. My body is capable of a firm, but not of a violent or sudden agitation. I avoid of late all violent exercises, and such as make me sweat, wherein my limbs grow weary before they are hot. I can stand a whole day together, and am not wearied with walking; but not on a high-road, for there, from my youth upwards, I have never loved to travel, except on horseback; on foot I mud myself up to the breech, and little fellows like me are subject, in the streets, to be elbowed and jostled, for want of appearance; I have ever loved to repose myself, whether sitting or lying, with my heels as high, or higher, than my seat.

He corrected that habit in his latter days, and found the benefit of so doing.

[1] Laertius, *in Vitâ*. Plato, *Laws*, viii. 13.

[2] Plutarch, *That it is requisite a Prince should be learned*, c. 6.

The military profession very pleasant and honourable.

There is no profession so pleasant as the military; a profession both noble in its execution (for valour is the strongest, proudest, and most generous of all virtues), and noble in its cause; there is no utility either more universal, or more just, than the protection of the peace and greatness of one's country. The company of so many noble, young, and active men, delights you; the ordinary sight of so many tragic spectacles; the freedom of this conversation without art, and a masculine and unceremonious way of living, pleases you; the variety of a thousand several actions, the inspiriting harmony of martial music, that ravishes and inflames both your ears and soul; the honour of this vocation, nay, even its sufferings and difficulties, which Plato so little heeds, that, in his Republics, he makes women and children share in them, are delightful to you. You put yourselves voluntarily upon particular exploits and hazards, according as you judge of their lustre and importance; and see when even life itself is excusably employed,—

Pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis.[1]

"How beautiful it is to die in arms."

To fear common dangers that concern so great a multitude of men, not to dare to do what so many sorts of souls, and a whole people do, is for a heart that is low and mean beyond all measure; company encourages even children themselves. If others excel you in knowledge, in gracefulness, and strength, or fortune, you have third causes to blame for that; but to give place to them in stability of mind, you can blame no one for that but yourself. Death is more abject, more languishing and painful in bed than in battle; fevers and catarrhs as painful and mortal as a musket-shot; whoever has fortified himself valiantly to bear the accidents of common life, would not need to raise his courage to be a soldier. *Vivere, mi Lucili, militare est.*[2] "To live, my Lucilius, is to make war."

[1] *Æneid*, ii. 317.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 96.

I do not remember that I ever had the itch, and yet scratching is one of nature's sweetest gratifications, and nearest at hand; but the smart follows too near. I use it most in my ears, which are often apt to itch.

Montaigne's hale constitution.

I came into the world with all my senses entire, even to perfection. My stomach is commodiously good, as also is my head and my breath; and, for the most part, uphold themselves so in the height of fevers. I have passed the age to which some nations, not without reason, have prescribed so just a term of life, that they would not suffer men to exceed it;[1] and yet I have some intermissions, though short and inconstant, so clean and sound, as are little inferior to the health and elasticity of my youth. I do not speak of vigour and sprightliness; 'tis not reason that it should follow me beyond its limits;—

> Non hoc amplius est liminis, aut aquæ
> Cælestis, patiens latus.[2]

> "My sides no longer can sustain
> The hardships of the wind and rain."

His mind not much disturbed by the ailments of the body.

My face and eyes presently discover me; all my alterations begin there, and appear worse than they really are; my friends often pity me, before I feel the cause in myself. My looking-glass does not fright me; for even in my youth, it has befallen me more than once to have a scurvy complexion, and of ill prognostic, without any great consequences; insomuch that the physicians, not finding any cause within answerable to that outward alteration, attributed it to the mind, and that some secret passion had tormented me within; but they were deceived. If my body would govern itself as well under my rule as my mind does, we should move a little more at our ease; my mind was then not only free from trouble, but moreover full of joy and satisfaction, as it commonly is, half by complexion, half by its own design:—

> Nec vitiant artus ægræ contagia mentis.[3]

[1] *Viz*: fifty years. [2] Horace, *Od.* iii. 10, 19. [3] Ovid, *Tristia*, iii. 8, 25.

"I never yet could find
That e'er my body suffered by my mind."

I am of opinion that this temperature of my soul has often raised my body from its lapses; this is often depressed; while, if the other be not brisk and gay, 'tis at least quiet, and at rest. I had a quartan ague four or five months, that made me look miserably ill; yet my mind was always, not only calm, but pleasant. If the pain be without me, the weakness and languor do not much afflict me; I feel several bodily faintings, that beget a horror in me but to name, which yet I should less fear than a thousand passions and agitations of mind that I see about. I resolve no more to run, 'tis enough that I crawl along; and I complain not of the natural decadence that I feel in myself:—

Quis tumidum guttur miratur in Alpibus?[1]
"Say, whom do goitres in the Alps surprise?"

any more than I regret that my duration shall not be as long and entire as that of an oak.

I have no reason to complain of my imagination; I have had few thoughts in my life that have so much as broken my sleep, if not those of desire, which have awakened without afflicting me. I dream but seldom, and then of chimeras and fantastic things, commonly produced from pleasant thoughts, and rather ridiculous than sad; and believe it to be true that dreams are the true interpreters of our inclinations; but there is art required to sort and understand them:—

Res, quæ in vitâ usurpant homines, cogitant, curant, vident,
Quæque agunt vigilantes, agitantque, ea si cui somno accidunt,
Minus mirandum est.[2]

"'Tis no wonder if what men practice, think, care for, and do when awake, should also run in their heads, and move them when they are asleep." Plato moreover says,[3] that 'tis

[1] Juvenal, xiii. 162.

[2] These Latin verses, which are to be found in Cicero, *de Divinat.* i. 22, are taken from a tragedy of Accius, entitled *Brutus*, wherein they are addressed by a soothsayer to Tarquinius Superbus, one of the principal *dramatis personæ*.

[3] In the *Timæus*.

the office of prudence to draw instructions of divination of future things from dreams. I see nothing in it, if not the wonderful experiences that Socrates, Xenophon, and Aristotle, all men of irreproachable authority, relate. The historians say[1] that the Atlantes never dream; who also never eat anything that has received death; which I add, forasmuch as it is, perhaps, the reason why they never dream; for Pythagoras ordered a certain preparation of diet, to beget appropriate dreams.[2] Mine are always very gentle, without any agitation of body, or expression of voice. I have seen several of my time wonderfully disturbed in them; Theon the philosopher walked in his sleep; as also did Pericles' servant, and that upon the tiles and tops of the house.[3]

He was not dainty in his diet.

I hardly ever choose my dish at table, but fall to of the next at hand, and unwillingly change my course. A confusion of meats, and a clutter of dishes, displease me as much as any other confusion. I am easily satisfied with few viands, and am an enemy to the opinion of Favorinus,[4] that in a feast they should snatch from you the meat you like, and set another plate of another sort before you; and that it is a pitiful supper if you do not sate your guests with the rumps of birds, the beccafico being the only one that deserves to be all eaten. I usually eat salt meats; and yet I love bread that has no salt in it; and my baker never sends up any other to my table, contrary to the custom of the country. In my infancy, what they had most to correct in me was the refusal of things that children commonly best love, as sugar, sweetmeats, and march-pane. My tutor contended with this aversion to delicacies, as a kind of over-nicety; and indeed 'tis nothing else but a difficulty of taste in anything to which it applies itself. Whoever shall cure a child of an obstinate affection to brown bread, bacon, or garlic, will cure him of all kind of delicateness. There are some who pretend to hardiness and patience, by wishing

[1] Herod. iv. 184. Pomponius Mela, i. 8.

[2] Cicero, *de Divinat.* ii. 58.

[3] Laertius, *Life of Pyrrho*, ix. 82.

[4] Favorinus expresses the directly contrary opinion. *See* Aulus Gellius, xv. 8.

for beef and ham amongst pheasant and partridge; they have a good time on't; 'tis the delicacy of delicacies; 'tis the taste of an effeminate fortune, that disrelishes ordinary and accustomed things, *per quæ luxuria divitiarum tædio ludit.*[1] Not to make good cheer with what another does, and to be curious in what a man eats, is the essence of this vice:—

Si modicâ cœnare times olus omne patellâ.[2]

"If an herb soup in a small dish thou fear'st."

There is indeed this difference, that 'tis better to oblige one's appetite to things that are most easy to be had; but 'tis always a vice to oblige one's self; I formerly said a kinsman of mine was nice, who, by being in our gallies, had unlearned the use of beds, and to put off his clothes when he went to sleep.

Montaigne was brought up from his cradle in the meanest and most common manner of living.

If I had any sons I should readily wish them my fortune. The good father that God gave me, who has nothing of me but the acknowledgment of his bounty, but truly 'tis a very hearty one, sent me from my cradle to be brought up in a poor village of his, and there continued me all the while I was at nurse, and even longer, bringing me up to the meanest and most common way of living: *Magna pars libertatis est bene moratus venter.*[3] "A well-governed stomach is a great part of liberty." Never take upon yourselves, and much less give up to your wives, the care of their bringing up; leave the forming them to fortune, under popular and natural laws; leave it to custom to train them up to frugality and austerity, that they may rather descend from hardships than mount up to them. This humour of his yet aimed at another end, that is, to make me familiar with those people, and that condition of men, which most need our assistance; believing that I should be more holden to regard them who extended their arms to me, than

That mothers ought not to have the education of their children.

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 18.
[2] Horace, *Epist.* i. 5, 2.
[3] Seneca, *Epist.* 123.

those who turned their backs upon me; and for this reason also it was that he provided me godfathers of the meanest fortune, to oblige and bind me to them.

What was the advantage of his education.

Neither has his design succeeded altogether ill; for, whether be it upon the account of glory, because there is more honour in such a condescension, or out of natural compassion, that has a very great power over me, I have a very kind inclination towards the meaner sort of people. The faction which I condemn in our civil wars, I shall more sharply condemn when I see them flourish; it will half reconcile me to them when I shall see them miserable and oppressed. How much do I admire the generous humour of Chelonis, daughter and wife to kings of Sparta![1] Whilst her husband Cleombrotus, in the commotion of her city, had the advantage over Leonidas, her father, she, like a good daughter, stuck close to her father in all his misery and exile, in opposition to the conqueror. But so soon as the chance of war turned, she changed her will with the change of fortune, and generously turned to her husband's side, whom she accompanied throughout, where his ruin carried him; having, as it appears, no other wish than to cleave to that side that stood most in need of her, and where she could best manifest her compassion. I am naturally more apt to follow the example of Flaminius,[2] who more readily gave his assistance to those that had most need of him, than to those who had power to do him good, than I am that of Pyrrhus, who was of a humour to truckle to the great, and to domineer over the small.

Montaigne did not love to sit long at table.

Long sittings at meat both trouble me and do me harm; for perhaps from having, for want of something better to do, accustomed myself to it from a child, I eat all the while I sit. Therefore it is that, at my own house, though the meals there are of the

[1] Plutarch, *Lives of Agis and Cleomenes*, c. 5.

[2] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*.

shortest, I usually sit down a little after the rest, after the manner of Augustus;[1] but I do not imitate him in rising also before the rest of the company; on the contrary, I love to sit still a long time after, and to hear them talk, provided I am none of the talkers; for I tire and hurt myself with speaking upon a full stomach, as much as I find it pleasant and very wholesome to argue and to strain my voice before dinner.

The ancient Greeks and Romans[2] had more reason than we in setting apart for eating, which is a principal action of life, if not diverted by other extraordinary business, many hours, indeed the greatest part of the night; eating and drinking more deliberately than we do, who perform all our actions in post haste; and, in extending this natural pleasure to more leisure and better use, intermixing with their meals several pleasant and profitable offices of conversation.

The abstinence of which Montaigne was capable.

They whose concern it is to have a care of me, may very easily hinder me from eating anything they think will do me harm; for in such things I never covet nor miss anything I do not see; but withal, if it once comes in my sight, 'tis in vain to persuade me to forbear; so that when I design to fast I must be parted from those that eat suppers, and must only have so much given me as is required for a limited collation; for if I sit down to table I forget my resolution. When I order my cook to alter the manner of dressing any dish of meat, all my family knows what it means; that my stomach is out of order, and that I shall not touch it.

Account of his taste, with its changes and revolutions.

I love to have all meats that will endure it very little boiled or roasted, and love them very high, even to smell of it, in many. Nothing but toughness generally offends me (of any other quality I am as patient and indifferent as any man I have known); so that, contrary to the common humour, even in fish it often happens that I find them both too fresh and too

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ.*

[2] Suetonius, *in Vitâ*, c. 74.

firm; not for want of teeth, which I ever had good, even to excellence, and which age does but now begin to threaten; I have ever been used every morning to rub them with a napkin, and before and after dinner. God is favourable to those whom he makes to die by degrees; 'tis the only benefit of old age; the last death will be so much the less full and painful; it will kill but a half or quarter of a man. I had one tooth lately fall out without drawing, and without pain; it was the natural term of its duration; both that part of my being and several others, are already dead, and others half dead, of those that were most active and in highest esteem during my vigorous years, so that I melt and steal away from myself. What folly would it be in my understanding to fear this fall, when already so much of it is got over, as if it were from its utmost height? I hope I shall not. I in truth receive a principal consolation in the meditation of my death, that it will be just and natural; and that henceforward I cannot herein either require or hope from destiny any other but unlawful favours. Men make themselves believe that they formerly had, as greater stature, so longer lives; but they deceive themselves; and Solon, who was of those elder times, does nevertheless limit the duration of life to threescore and ten years.[1] I, who have so much and so universally adored this ἄριστον μέτρον "excellent mediocrity" of ancient times,[2] and who have concluded the most moderate measure the most perfect, shall I pretend to an unreasonable and prodigious old age? Whatever happens contrary to the course of nature may be troublesome; but what comes according to her, must always be acceptable and pleasant: *Omnia quæ secundum naturam fiunt, sunt habenda in bonis:*[3] "All things that are done according to nature are to be accounted good:" and thus, Plato says,[4] the death which is occasioned by wounds or disease is violent; but that which surprises us, old age conducting us to it, is of all others the

[1] Herod. i. 32.
[2] See Laertius, i. 93.
[3] Cicero, *de Senect.* c. 19.
[4] In the *Timæus.*

most easy, and in some sort delicious. *Vitam adolescentibus vis aufert, senibus maturitas.*[1] "Young men are taken away by force, old men by maturity." Death mixes and confounds itself throughout with life; decay anticipates its hour, and shoulders itself even into the course of our growing up. I have pictures of myself, taken at five and twenty, and five and thirty years of age; I compare them with that lately drawn; by how much more is my present image unlike the former, than to that I shall have after death! It is too much to abuse nature, to make her trot so far, that she must be forced to leave us, and abandon our conduct, our eyes, teeth, legs, and all the rest, to the mercy of a foreign and begged assistance; and to resign us into the hands of art, being weary of following us herself.

I am not very fond either of salads or fruits, except melons; my father hated all sorts of sauces, and I love them all. Eating too much hurts me; but for the quality of what I eat, I do not yet certainly know that any sort of meat disagrees with my stomach; neither have I observed that either full moon or decrease, spring or autumn, make any difference to me. We have in us motions that are inconstant, and for which no reason can be given; for example, I first found radishes very grateful to my stomach, since that nauseous, and now grateful again. In several other things, likewise, I find my stomach and appetite to vary after the same manner; I have changed and changed again from white wine to claret, from claret to white.

Montaigne was fond of fish, and did not love to mix it with flesh.

I am a great lover of fish, and consequently make my fasts feasts, and my feasts fasts; and believe what some people say, that it is more easy of digestion than flesh. As I make a conscience of eating flesh upon fish-days, so does my taste make a conscience of mixing fish and flesh; the difference betwixt them seems to me to be too great so to do. From my youth I have used myself to be out of the way occasionally at some

[1] Cicero, *de Senect.* c. 19.

meal, either to sharpen my appetite against the next morning (for, as Epicurus fasted and made lean meals to accustom his pleasure to make shift without abundance,[1] I, on the contrary, do it to prepare my pleasure to make better and more cheerful use of abundance); or else I fasted to preserve my vigour for the service of some action of body or mind; for both the one and the other of those are cruelly dulled in me by repletion; and, above all, I hate that foolish coupling of so healthful and sprightly a goddess with that little belching god, bloated with the fume of his liquor; or to cure my sick stomach, and for want of fit company; for I say, as the same Epicurus did,[2] that a man is not so much to regard what he eats, as with whom he eats; and commend Chilo, that he would not engage himself to be at Periander's feast, till he was informed who were to be the other guests.[3] No dish is so acceptable to me, nor no sauce so alluring, as that which is extracted from the society. I think it to be more wholesome to eat more leisurely and less, and to eat oftener; but I would have the value of appetite and hunger done justice to. I should take no pleasure to be fed with three or four stinted repasts a-day, at fixed hours, after a medical manner; who will assure me that, if I have a good appetite in the morning, I shall have the same at supper? Let us old fellows, especially, take the first opportune time of eating, and leave to almanac-makers the hopes and prognostics. The utmost fruit of my health is pleasure; let us take hold of the present and known. I avoid constancy in these laws of fasting; who will have one form serve him, let him avoid the continuing of it; we harden ourselves in it; our forces are there laid asleep; six months after, you shall find your stomach so inured unto it, that all you have got is only the loss of your liberty of doing otherwise but to your prejudice.

Rules which he observed with regard to his clothing.

I never keep my legs and thighs warmer in winter than in summer; one single pair of silk stockings is all; I have suffered myself,

[1] Seneca, *Epist.* 18. [2] Id. *ib.* [3] Plutarch, *Banquet of the Seven Sages*

for the relief of my rheums, to keep my head warmer, and my belly, upon the account of my colic; my diseases in a few days habituated themselves thereto, and disdained my ordinary provisions; I presently got from a single cap to a whole one, and from this to a double one. The quilting of my doublet serves only appearance; it signifies nothing, if I do not add a hare's or vulture's skin, and wear an under cap upon my head. Follow this gradation, and you will go a very fine way to work. I am resolved to proceed no farther, and would leave off what I have begun, if I durst. You fall into some new inconvenience? all this is labour lost; you are accustomed to it; seek out some other. Thus do such ruin and destroy themselves, who submit to be pestered with these enforced and superstitious rules; they must add something more, and something more after that; there is no end on't.

His preference of dinners to suppers; and the measure he observed in his liquor.

For what concerns our affairs and pleasures, it is much more commodious, as the ancients did, to lose a man's dinner, and defer making good cheer, till the hour of retirement and repose, without breaking a day; and so was I formerly used to do. For health, I since by experience find, on the contrary, that it is better to dine, and that the digestion goes on better waking. I am not very apt to be thirsty, either well or sick, my mouth is indeed apt to be dry, but without thirst; and commonly I never drink but with thirst that is created by eating and some time after I've been eating. I drink pretty well for a man of my pitch; in summer, and at a relishing meal, I do not only exceed the limits of Augustus,[1] that drank but thrice precisely; but not to offend the rules of Democritus, who forbade that man should stop at four, as an unlucky number,[2] I proceed, at need, to the fifth glass, about three half pints. For the little glasses are my favourites, and I take a delight to drink them off, which other people avoid as

[1] Suetonius, *in Vitâ*, c. 77.

[2] For *Democritus* read *Demetrius*. See Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxviii. 6.

an unbecoming thing. I mix my wine sometimes with half, sometimes the third part water; and when I am at home, by an ancient custom that my father's physician prescribed both to him and himself, they mix that which is designed for me in the buttery two or three hours before 'tis brought in. 'Tis said that Cranaus,[1] king of the Athenians, was the inventor of this custom of mixing wine with water; whether profitably or no, I have heard disputed. I think it more decent and wholesome for children to drink no wine till after sixteen or eighteen years of age. The most usual and common method of living is the most becoming; all particularity, in my opinion, is to be avoided, and I should as much hate a German that mixed water with his wine, as I should do a Frenchman that drank it pure. Public custom gives the law in these things.

His notion with regard to air, temperature, &c.

I fear a fog, and fly from smoke as from the plague; the first repairs I fell upon in my own house were the chimneys and houses of office, the common and insupportable nuisances of all old buildings; and amongst the difficulties of war, reckon the choking dust they make us ride in a whole day together. I have a free and easy respiration; and my colds for the most part go off without offence to the lungs, and without a cough.

The heat of summer is more an enemy to me than the cold of winter; for, besides the incommodity of heat, less remediable than cold, and besides the force of the sunbeams that strike upon the head, all glittering light offends my eyes; I could not now sit at dinner over-against a flaming fire.

To dull the whiteness of paper, in those times when I was more used to read, I laid a piece of glass upon my book, and found my eyes much relieved by it. I am to this hour ignorant of the use of spectacles, and can see as far as ever I did, or as any other; 'tis true that, in the evening, I begin to find a little trouble and weakness in my sight, if I read; an exer-

[1] According to Athenæus, ii. 2, it was not *Cranaus*, but Amphictyon, his successor, who introduced this custom.

cise that I have always found troublesome, especially by night. Here is one step back, and a very sensible one; I shall retire another, from the second to the third, and so to the fourth, so gently, that I shall be stark blind before I shall be sensible of the age and decay of my sight; so artificially do the fatal sisters untwist our lives! And I doubt that my hearing begins to grow thick, and you shall see I shall have lost it, when I shall still lay the fault on the voices of those that speak to me; man must screw up his soul to a high pitch, to make it sensible how it ebbs away.

My walking is quick and firm; and I know not which of the two, my mind, or my body, I have most to do to keep in the same state. That preacher is very much my friend, that can oblige my attention a whole sermon through. In places of ceremony, where every one's countenance is so starched, where I have seen the ladies keep even their eyes so fixed, I could never order it so, that some part or other of me did not lash out! so that, though I was seated, I was never settled.[1]

Chrysippus drunk in his legs.

As the philosopher Chrysippus's chambermaid said of her master, that he was only drunk in his legs,[2] for it was his custom to be always kicking them about in what place soever he sat, and said it at a time when, the wine having made all his companions drunk, he found no alteration in himself at all; the same may also be said of me from my infancy, that I had either folly or quicksilver in my feet, so much stirring and unsettledness there is in them wherever they are placed.

He was too greedy in his appetite.

'Tis indecent, besides the hurt it does to one's health, and even to the pleasure of eating, to eat so greedily as I do; I often bite my tongue, and sometimes my fingers, from haste. Diogenes meeting a boy eating after that manner, gave his tutor a box on the ear.[3] There were men at Rome that taught people to chew, as well as to walk, with a good grace. I lose the leisure of speaking, which

[1] The edition of 1588 has: "And as to gesticulation, I am never without a switch in my hand, riding or walking."

[2] Laertius, *in Vitâ*.

[3] Plutarch, *That Virtue may be taught*

gives the best relish to tables, provided the discourse be suitable, pleasant, and short.

His judgment concerning the pleasures of the table.

There is jealousy and envy amongst our pleasures; they cross and hinder one another; Alcibiades, a man very well read, understanding how to make good cheer, banished even music from tables, that they might not disturb the pleasantness of discourse, by the reason that Plato lends him:[1] "That it is a custom of common men to call fiddlers and singing-men to feasts, for want of good discourse and pleasant talk, with which men of understanding know how to entertain one another." Varro requires this in entertainments:[2] "Persons of graceful presence and agreeable conversation, that are neither silent nor babblers; neatness and delicacy both of meat and place, and fair weather." To dine your friends well requires no slight skill, and gives no slight pleasure; the greatest captains and the greatest philosophers have not disdained to give their attention to this science. My imagination has delivered three banquets to the custody of my memory, which fortune rendered sovereignly sweet to me, upon different occasions, in my most flourishing age; my present state excludes me; for each guest, in the good temper of body and mind wherein he then finds himself, supplies for his own use the principal grace and savour. I, who but crawl upon the earth, hate this inhuman wisdom, that will have us despise and hate all culture of body; I look upon it as an equal injustice to loathe natural pleasures, as to be too much in love with them. Xerxes was a fool, who, environed with all human delights, proposed a reward to him that could find him out others;[3] but he is not much less so, who cuts off any of those pleasures that nature has provided for him. A man should neither pursue nor fly, but receive them. I receive them, I confess, a little too affectionately and kindly, and easily suffer myself to follow my natural inclinations. We

[1] In the dialogue entitled *Protagoras*.
[2] Aulus Gellius, xiii. 2.
[3] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 7.

have nothing to do to exaggerate their inanity; they themselves will make us sufficiently sensible of it; thanks be to our sickly minds, that abate our joys, and put us out of taste with them, as with ourselves; they entertain both themselves and all they receive, one while better, and another worse, according to their insatiable, vagabond, and versatile essence:—

Sincerum est nisi vas, quodcunque infundis, acescit.[1]

"Your wine grows acid, when the cask is foul."

I, who boast that I so curiously and particularly embrace the conveniences of life, find, when I nearly consider them, very little more than wind. But what then? We are wind throughout; and, moreover, the wind itself, more discreetly than we, loves to bluster and shift here and there, and contents itself with its proper office, without desiring stability and solidity, qualities that belong not to it.

In what rank he placed the pleasures of the imagination and those of the body.

The pure pleasures, as well as the pure displeasures, of the imagination, say some, are the greatest, as was expressed by the balance of Critolaus.[2] 'Tis no wonder; it makes them to its own liking, and cuts them out of the whole cloth, of which I every day see notable examples, and, peradventure, to be desired. But I, who am of a mixed and heavy condition, cannot snap so soon at this one simple object, but that I negligently suffer myself to be carried away with the present pleasures of the general human law, intellectually sensible, and sensibly intellectual. The Cyrenaic philosophers hold that as corporal pains, so corporal pleasures are more powerful, both as double, and more just.[3] There are some, as Aristotle says,[4] who, out of a savage kind of stupidity, are disgusted with them; and I know others who, out of ambition, are the same. Why do they not moreover forswear breathing? Why do they not live of their own, and refuse

[1] Horace, *Epist.* i. 2. 54.

[2] In my opinion (says M. Coste) Montaigne here applies this balance to a purpose very different from that which Critolaus applied it to, if we may judge of this balance by what Cicero says of it *Tusc. Quæs.* v. 17.

[3] Laertius, ii. 90.

[4] *Ethics*, ii. 7.

light because it shines gratis, and costs them neither pains nor invention? Let Mars, Pallas, or Mercury afford them their light by which to see, instead of Venus, Ceres, and Bacchus. Will they not seek the squaring of the circle, even when mounted upon their wives? I hate that we should be enjoined to have our minds in the clouds when our bodies are at table; I would not have the mind there nailed, nor that it should wallow there; but I would have it apply itself to that place; to sit, but not to lie down there. Aristippus maintained nothing but the body, as if we had no soul; Zeno stickled only for the soul, as if we had no body; both of them faultily. Pythagoras, say they, followed a philosophy that was all contemplation; Socrates, one that was all manners and action; Plato found out a mean betwixt both. But they only say so for discourse' sake. For the true mean is found in Socrates; and Plato is more Socratic than Pythagoric, and it becomes him better. When I dance, I dance; when I sleep, I sleep; nay, and when I walk alone in a beautiful orchard, if my thoughts are some part of the time taken up with extrinsic occurrences, I some other part of the time call them back again to my walk, to the orchard, to the sweetness of the solitude, and to myself.

Nature has rendered those actions agreeable which man is under a necessity of performing.

Nature has with a motherly tenderness observed this, that the actions she has enjoined us for our necessity should be also pleasant to us; and invites us to them, not only by reason, but also by appetite; and 'tis injustice to corrupt her laws. When I see both Cæsar and Alexander, in the thickest of their greatest business, so fully enjoy human and bodily pleasures, I do not say that they slackened their souls, but wound them up higher by vigour of courage, subjecting these violent employments and laborious thoughts to the ordinary use of life; wise, had they believed that the last was their ordinary employment; the first, their extraordinary vocation. We are great fools. "He has passed his life in ease," say we: "I have done nothing to-day." What! have you not

lived? 'Tis not only the fundamental, but the most illustrious of your occupations. "Had I been put to the management of great affairs, I should have shown what I could do." Have you known how to meditate, and manage your life? you have performed the greatest work of all; for a man to show and set himself out, nature has no need of fortune; she equally shows herself in all degrees, and behind a curtain, as well as without one. Have you known how to compose your manners? You have done a great deal more than he who has composed books. Have you known how to take repose? You have done more than he who has taken cities and empires.

What is man's true masterpiece.

The great and glorious masterpiece of man is to know how to live to purpose; all other things, to reign, to lay up treasure, to build, are at the most but mere appendices and little props. I take a delight to see a general of an army at the foot of a breach he intends presently to assault, giving himself up entire and free at dinner, to talk and be merry with his friends; and Brutus, when heaven and earth were conspired against him and the Roman liberty, stealing some hour of the night from his rounds to read and abridge Polybius, as in all security.[1] 'Tis for little souls, that truckle under the weight of affairs, not to know how clearly to disengage themselves, and not to know how to lay them aside, and take them up again:—

> O fortes, pejoraque passi
> Mecum sæpe viri! nunc vino pellite curas:
> Cras ingens iterabimus æquor.[2]

> "Brave spirits, who with me have suffered sorrow,
> Drink cares away, we'll set up sails to-morrow."

Whether it be in jest or earnest that the theological and sorbonical wine, and their feasts, are turned into a proverb, I find it reason they should dine so much more commodiously and pleasantly, as they have profitably and seriously employed the morning in the exercise of their schools; the consciousness of having well spent the other hours is the just and sa-

[1] Plutarch, *in Vitâ.* [2] Horace, *Od.* i. 7, 30.

voury sauce of tables. The sages lived after that manner and that inimitable emulation to virtue, which astonishes us both in the one and the other Cato, that humour of theirs, severe even to troublesomeness, did thus gently submit itself and yield to the laws of the human condition, both of Venus and Bacchus; according to the precepts of their sect, that require a perfect wise man should be as expert and intelligent in the use of pleasures, as in all other duties of life: *Cui cor sapiat, ei et sapiat palatus.*[1] "He that has a learned soul, has a learned palate too."

Relaxation and affability specially becoming great and generous souls.

Yielding and facility do, methinks, wonderfully honour, and best become a strong and generous soul; Epaminondas did not think that to dance, sing, and play, and be intent upon them, with the young men of his city, were things that did any way derogate from the honour of his glorious victories, and the perfect reformation of manners that was in him.[2] And amongst so many admirable actions of Scipio, the grandfather, a person worthy the opinion of a heavenly extraction,[3] there is nothing that gives him a greater grace than to see him earnestly and childishly trifling, in gathering and choosing shells,[4] and playing at ducks and drakes upon the sea-shore with Lælius; and, if it was bad weather, amusing and pleasing himself by representing in comedies,[5] he wrote, the meanest and most popular actions of men; and having his head full of that wonderful enterprise of Hannibal and Africa, visiting the schools in Sicily, and being continually present at the philosophical lectures, improving himself even to the blind envy of his enemies at Rome.[6] Nor is there anything more remarkable in Socrates, than that, old as he was, he found time to make himself be instructed in dancing and playing upon instruments, and thought it time well spent. Yet this same

1 Cicero, *de Finib.* ii. 8.
2 Nepos, *in Vitâ*, c. 2.
3 *See* Aulus Gellius, vii. 1.
4 Cicero, *de Orat.* ii. 6; but this refers to Scipio the Younger. Indeed, in the edition of 1588, Montaigne speaks of him.
5 Those of Terence, in the composition of which according to Suetonius, Scipio (the Younger, however, not the Elder,) and his friend Lælius had a large share.
6 Livy, xxix. 19.

man has been seen in an ecstasy standing upon his feet a whole day and a night together, in the presence of all the Grecian army, surprised and ravished with some profound thought; he was the first who, among so many valiant men of the army, ran to the relief of Alcibiades, oppressed with the enemy, shielded him with his own body, and disengaged him from the crowd by absolute force of arm. It was he who, in the Delian battle, relieved and saved Xenophon, when dismounted from his horse; and who, amongst all the people of Athens, enraged like himself at so unworthy a spectacle, first presented himself to rescue Theramenes, whom the thirty tyrants were having dragged to execution by their guards, and desisted not from his bold enterprise, but at the remonstrances of Theramenes himself, though he was only followed by two more in all. He has been seen, when courted by a beauty, with whom he was in love, yet maintain a severe abstinence in time of need. He has been seen continually to go to the war, and with his bare feet to walk upon ice; to wear the same robe winter and summer; to surpass all his companions in endurance of labour; and to eat no more at a feast than at his own private dinner; he was seen seven and twenty years together to endure hunger, poverty, the indocility of his children, and the claws of his wife, with the same countenance; and in the end calumny, tyranny, imprisonment, fetters, and poison; but was he invited to a drinking bout, on any occasion of civility? he was also the man of the party to whom the advantage remained; and he never refused to play at cobnut, nor to ride the hobby-horse with the boys, and it became him well; for all actions, says philosophy, equally become, and equally honour a wise man. We have enough wherewithal to do it, and we ought never to be weary of representing the image of this great man in all the patterns and forms of perfection. There are very few examples of life full and pure; and they wrong us in our instruction to propose to us every day those that are weak and imperfect, scarce good for any one service, that pull us back, and that are rather

corrupters than correctors of manners. The people deceive themselves; a man goes much more easily indeed by the ends, where the extremity serves for a bound, a stop, and guide, than by the middle way, which is large and open; and according to art, than according to nature; but withal much less nobly and commendably.

What discovers greatness of soul.

Grandeur of soul consists not so much in mounting and in proceeding forward, as in knowing how to govern and circumscribe itself. It takes everything for great that is enough; and shows its height better in loving moderate than eminent things. There is nothing so handsome and lawful as well and duly to play the man; nor science so hard as well to know how to live this life; and of all the infirmities we have, 'tis the most savage to despise our being.

Whoever has a mind to send his soul abroad, let him do it, if he can, when the body is ill at ease, to preserve it from the contagion; but otherwise let him, on the contrary, favour and assist it, and not refuse to participate of its natural pleasures and delights with a conjugal complacency; bringing to it withal, if it be wiser, moderation, lest by indiscretion they should confound themselves with displeasures. Intemperance is the pest of pleasure; and temperance is not its scourge, but its seasoning; Eudoxus, who therein established the sovereign good, and his companions, who set so high a value upon it, tasted it in its most charming sweetness by the means of temperance, which in them was singular and exemplary.[1]

How we ought to behave with regard both to pain and pleasure.

I enjoin my soul to look upon pain and pleasure with an eye equally regular: *Eodem enim vitio est effusio animi in lætitiâ, quo in dolore contractio*,[2] "For 'tis by the same vice that we dilate ourselves in mirth, and contract in sorrow," and equally firm; but the one gayly, and the other severely, and according to what it is able, to be as careful to restrain the one as to extend the other. The judging rightly of goods brings along

[1] Laertius, viii. 88. Aristotle, *Ethics*, x. 2.

[2] Cicero, *Tusc. Quæs.* iv. 31.

with it the judging soundly of evils; and pain has something not to be avoided in its tender beginnings, and pleasure has something that may be avoided in its excessive end. Plato[1] couples them together, and will that it should be equally the office of fortitude to fight against pain, and against the immoderate and charming blandishments of pleasure; they are two fountains, from which whoever draws, when, and as much as he needs, whether city, man, or beast, is very happy. The first is to be taken physically and upon necessity, more scarcely; the other for thirst, but not to drunkenness. Pain, pleasure, love, hatred, are the first things that a child is sensible of; if, when reason comes, they apply themselves to it, that is virtue.

The use Montaigne made of life.

I have a peculiar method of my own; I pass over my time, when it is ill and uneasy; but when 'tis good, I will not pass it over. I savour and stick to it; a man must run over the ill, and insist upon the good. This ordinary phrase of pastime, and passing away the time, represents the custom of that wise sort of people, who think they cannot have a better account of their lives, than to let them run out and slide away, to pass them over, and to balk them, and, as much as they can, to take no notice of them, and to shun them, as a thing of troublesome and contemptible quality; but I know it to be another kind of thing, and find it both valuable and commodious, even in its latest decay, wherein I now enjoy it; and nature has delivered it into our hands, furnished with such and so favourable circumstances, that we have only ourselves to blame if it be troublesome to us, or slide unprofitably away: *Stulti vita ingrata est, trepida est, tota in futurum fertur:*[2] "The life of a fool is uneasy, timorous, and wholly bent upon the future." Nevertheless, I compose myself to lose mine without regret, but withal as a thing that is losable by its condition, not that is troublesome or importunate; neither properly does it well become any not to be displeased when they die, excepting such as are

[1] *Laws*, i. [2] Seneca, *Epist.* 15.

pleased to live. There is good husbandry in enjoying it; I enjoy it double to what others do; for the measure in fruition depends more or less on our application to it. Now, especially, that I perceive mine to be so short in time, I would extend it in weight; I would stop the rapidity of its flight, by the suddenness of my seizing upon it; and by the vigour of using it compensate the speed of its running away; by how much the possession of living is more short, I must take it so much deeper and more full.

Others are sensible of the sweetness of contentment and of prosperity; I feel it too as well as they, but not as it slides and passes by; a man ought to study, taste, and ruminate upon it, to render worthy thanks to him that grants it to us. They enjoy the other pleasures as they do that of sleep, without knowing it. To the end that even sleep itself should not so stupidly escape from me, I have formerly caused myself to be disturbed in my sleep, that I might the better and more sensibly relish and savour it. I consult myself about a contentment; I do not skim, but sound it; and bend my reason, now grown perverse and ill-humoured, to entertain it. Do I find myself in calm composedness? Is there any pleasure that tickles me? I do not suffer it to dally with my senses only; I associate my soul to it too; not there to engage herself, but therein to take delight; not there to lose herself, but to be present there; and employ her on her part to view herself in this prosperous estate, to weigh, esteem, and amplify its happiness; she reckons how much she stands indebted to God, to be in repose of conscience and other intestine passions; to have the body in its natural disposition, orderly and competently enjoying the soft and flattering functions by which he of his bounty is pleased to recompense the sufferings wherewith his justice, at his good pleasure, does scourge and chastise us; how great a benefit it is to her to be so seated, that which way soever she turns her eye, the heaven is calm and serene about her; no desire, no fear or doubt, that troubles the air; nor any difficulty past, present, or to come, that her

imagination may not pass over without offence. This consideration takes great lustre from the comparison of different conditions, and therefore it is that I propose to myself, in a thousand aspects, those whom fortune, or their own error, torment and whirl about, and moreover those nearer me, that so negligently and incuriously receive their good fortune; these are men who pass away their time indeed; they pass over the present and that which they possess, to look after hope and vain shadows and images, which fancy puts into their heads,—

> Morte obita quales fama est volitare figuras,
> Aut quæ sopitos deludunt somnia sensus:[1]

> "Such shapes, they say, that dead men's spirits have,
> Or those in dreams our drowsy sense deceive:"

which hasten and prolong their flight according as they are pursued. The fruit and aim of their pursuit is to pursue; as Alexander said, that the end of his labour was to labour:[2]—

> Nil actum credens, cum quid superesset agendum.[3]

> "Thinking naught done, if aught was left to do."

For my part, then, I love life, and cultivate it, such as it has pleased God to bestow it upon us. I do not desire it should be without the necessity of eating and drinking; and I should think to offend no less excusably to wish this necessity had been double: *Sapiens divitiarum naturalium quæsitor acerrimus:*[4] "A wise man seeks with avidity natural riches;" nor, that we should support ourselves by putting only a little of that drug into our mouths, by which Epimenides took away his appetite, and kept himself alive;[5] nor that a man should stupidly create children with his fingers or heels; but rather, with reverence I speak it, that we might voluptuously create them with our fingers and heels; not that the body should be without desire, and void of delight; these are un-

[1] *Æneid*, x. 641.
[2] Arrian, *de Exped. Alex.* v. 26.
[3] Lucan, ii. 657. The poet speaks here of Cæsar, who was altogether as active and indefatigable as Alexander.
[4] Seneca, *Epist.* 119.
[5] Laertius, *in Vitâ*

grateful and wicked complaints. I accept kindly, and with acknowledgment, what nature has done for me; am well pleased with it and proud of it. A man does wrong to the great and omnipotent giver, to refuse, disannul, and disfigure his gift; he has made everything well: *Omnia quæ secundum naturam sunt æstimatione digna sunt.*[1] "All things that are according to nature are worthy of esteem."

His discourse like his deportment.

Of philosophical opinions, I more willingly embrace those that are the most solid, that is to say, the most human, and most our own; my discourse is suitable to my manners, low and humble; philosophy plays the child, to my notion, when she puts herself upon her ergos, to prove: that 'tis a barbarous alliance to marry the divine with the earthly, the reasonable with the unreasonable, the severe with the indulgent, the honest with the dishonest; that pleasure is a brutish quality, unworthy to be tasted by a wise man; that the sole pleasure he extracts from the enjoyment of a fair young wife, is the pleasure of his conscience to perform an action according to order, as to put on his boots for a profitable journey. O, that his followers had no more right, or nerve, or juice, in getting their wives' maidenheads, than in these lessons.

Corporeal pleasure has its value, though it is inferior to that of the mind.

This is not what Socrates says, who is both her master and ours; he values, as he ought, bodily pleasure; but he prefers that of the soul, as having more force, constancy, facility, variety, and dignity. This, according to him, goes by no means alone (he is not so fantastic), but only it goes first; temperance in him is the moderatrix, not the adversary of pleasure. Nature is a gentle guide, but not more gentle than prudent and just: *Intrandum est in rerum naturam, et penitus quid ea postulet pervidendum.*[2] "A man must search into the nature of things, and examine what she requires." I hunt after the print of her foot throughout, but we have confounded it with

[1] Cicero, *de Finib.* iii. 6; where the sense is the same, though not in the very words quoted by Montaigne.

[2] Cicero, *de Finib.* v. 16.

artificial traces; and that academic and peripatetic sovereign good, which is "to live according to it," becomes by this means hard to limit and explain; and that of the Stoics, cousin-german to it, which is "to consent to nature." Is it not an error to esteem any actions less worthy, because they are necessary? and yet they cannot beat it out of my head that it is not a convenient marriage of pleasure with necessity, to which, says an ancient, the gods do always consent. To what end do we dismember by divorce, a building united by so joint and brotherly a correspondence? Let us, on the contrary, repair and strengthen it by mutual offices; let the mind rouse and quicken the heaviness of the body, and the body stop and fix the levity of the soul: *Qui, velut summum bonum, laudat animæ naturam, et, tanquam malum, naturam carnis accusat, profecto et animam carnaliter appetit, et carnem carnaliter fugit; quoniam id vanitate sentit humanâ, non veritate divinâ.*[1] "He that commends the nature of the soul as the supreme good, and accuses the nature of the flesh as evil, does certainly both carnally affect the soul, and carnally flies the flesh, because he is so possessed through human vanity, and not by divine truth." In this present which God has made us, there is nothing unworthy our care; we stand accountable even to a hair; and 'tis no slight commission to man, to conduct man according to his condition; 'tis express, plain, and the principal injunction of all, and the Creator has seriously and strictly enjoined it. Authority has alone the power to work upon common understandings, and is of more weight in a foreign language; and therefore let us again charge with it in this place: *Stultitiæ proprium quis non dixerit ignave et contumaciter facere quæ facienda sunt, et alio corpus impellere, alio animum; distrahique inter diversissimos motus?*[2] "Who will not say that it is the property of folly, slothfully and contumaciously to perform what is to be done, and to bend the body one way, and the mind another, and to be distracted betwixt quite different motions?"

[1] August. *de Civit. Dei*, xiv. 5.

[2] Seneca, *Epist.* 74.

To make this apparent, get one of these fellows one day to tell you what whimsies and imaginations he puts into his pate, and upon the account of which he diverted his thoughts from a good dinner, and complains of the time he spends in eating; you will find there is nothing so insipid in all the dishes at your table as this wise meditation of his soul (for the most part we had better sleep than wake to the purpose we do); and that his discourses and notions are not worth your partridge-pie. Though they were the raptures of Archimedes himself, what then? I do not here speak of, nor mix with, the rabble of us ordinary men, and the vanity of the thoughts and desires that divert us, those venerable souls, elevated by the ardour of devotion and religion, to a constant and conscientious meditation of divine things, who by a lively endeavour, and vehement hope, professing the use of the eternal nourishment, the final aim, and last step of Christian desires, the sole, constant, and incorruptible pleasure, disdain to apply themselves to our necessitous, fluid, and ambiguous conveniences, and easily resign to the body the care and use of sensual and temperate feeding. 'Tis a privileged study. I have ever amongst us observed supercelestial opinions, and subterranean manners, to be of singular accord.

The folly of man's aspiring to be above what he is.

Æsop, that great man, saw his master make water as he walked: "What," said he, "must we then dung as we run?"[1] Let us manage our time as well as we can, there will yet remain a great deal that will be idle and ill employed; the mind has no other hours wherein it would willingly do its business, without disassociating itself from the body, in that little space it needs for its necessity. They will put themselves out of themselves, and escape from being men; 'tis folly; instead of transforming themselves into angels, they transform themselves into beasts; instead of elevating, abase themselves. These transcendent humours affright me, like high and inaccessible cliffs and precipices; and nothing is hard for me to

[1] Planudus, *in Vitâ.*

digest in the life of Socrates but his ecstasies and communication with demons, nothing so human in Plato as that for which they say he was called divine; and of our sciences, those seem to me the most terrestrial and low that are highest mounted, and I find nothing so humble and mortal in the life of Alexander as his fancies about his immortalization. Philotas pleasantly quipt him in his answer; Alexander had congratulated himself by letter, concerning the oracle of Jupiter Ammon, who had placed him amongst the gods: "Upon thy account I am glad of it," said Philotas, "but the men are to be pitied who are to live with a man, and to obey him, who exceeds and is not contented with the measure of a man:"[1]—

> Diis te minorem quod geris, imperas.[2]

> "So you the power divine obey,
> Midst mortals wide you'll spread your way."

The pretty inscription wherewith the Athenians honoured the entry of Pompey into their city is conformable to my notion:—

> "The more thou acknowledgest thyself man,
> The more thou seemest a god."[3]

'Tis an absolute, and, as it were, a divine perfection, for a man to know how loyally to enjoy his being. We seek other conditions, by reason we do not understand the use of our own; and go out of ourselves, because we know not how to reside there. 'Tis to much purpose to go upon stilts, for when upon stilts we must yet walk upon our legs; and, when seated upon the most elevated throne in the world, we are still but seated upon our breech. The fairest lives, in my opinion, are those which regularly accommodate themselves to the common and human model, without miracle, without extravagance. But old age stands a little in need of a more gentle treatment. Let us recommend it to that God, the protector of health and wisdom, but, withal, a wisdom gay and sociable.

[1] Quintus Curtius, vi. 9. [2] Horace, *Od.* iii. 6, 5. [3] Plutarch, *in Vitâ*, c. 7.

Frui paratis et valido mihi,
Latoe, dones, et, precor, integrâ
  Cum mente; nec turpem senectam
Degere, nec cithara carentem.[1]

"Nor ask I more than sense and health,
Still to enjoy my present wealth.
From age and all its weakness free,
O, son of Jove, preserv'd by thee,
Give me to strike the tuneful lyre,
And thou my latest song inspire."

[1] Horace, *Od.* i. 31, 17.

APPENDIX TO THE ESSAYS

PART I.

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE

OF THE

EDITIONS OF MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYS.

COMPILED FROM DR. PAYEN, AND OTHER AUTHORITIES.

1580.

1. LES ESSAIS DE MESSIRE MICHEL, SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE, chevalier de l'ordre du roy, et gentilhomme ordinaire de sa chambre. Livre premier et second. A *Bourdeaus*, par *S. Millanges*, imprimeur ordinaire du roy. M.D.LXXX. 2 vols. 8vo.

This edition contains only the first two books, each of which occupies a volume, and has a separate title-page and table of contents. The first volume, which is printed in a larger type than the other, has 496 pages; the pagination of the second volume is exceedingly defective; the last page is numbered 650. At the commencement of the Essays is a preface, opening thus: *C'est ici un livre de bonne foi, lecteur;* and bearing date 1st of March, 1580.

This edition has no epigraph.

The first book contains fifty-seven chapters, and the second thirty-seven, being so far conformable to all the subsequent editions. In the 29th chapter of the First Book are twenty-nine sonnets by Etienne de la Boëtie.

In comparing this and the next two editions with those published after the death of the author, it is observable that they contain very few quotations, and that the chapters are much shorter.

Mons. J. B. Bastide, who paid much attention to the subject of Montaigne (see under 1822), and who proposed to publish an edition of the Essays, upon which, according to M. Beuchot, he had been engaged forty years, announced in 1807, in the Revue Philosophique (*deuxieme trimestre*), upon the authority of M de

Cayla, that there was another edition of the Essays published at Paris this same year (1580), in folio, *chez Michel Blageart*, differing from the one which this bookseller published in 1640; and Mons. Leclerq names this supposed edition, without entering into any discussion on the subject. M. Payen, however, writes: "I never believed in the existence of this edition; the most conclusive reason that induced me to reject it was derived from the name of the alleged printer; for it is clear, from the catalogue of Lottin, that there existed no printer of the name of Blageart at Paris in 1580, and that Michel did not commence business until 1631. It occurred to me that this was an incomplete or altered copy of the edition of 1640, which, by some mistake, had been assigned to the earlier date; but, having received an extract from the Catalogue of the Library of Bordeaux, in which was mentioned a copy of the Essays '*à Paris*, 1580,' I communicated my doubts on the subject to M. Jouannet, the librarian of that establishment, and this learned gentleman at once recognized the accuracy of my supposition, and informed me that the copy in his library is, in point of fact, a copy of the edition of 1640; and that the mistake, which is of old date, arose from the real date having got torn from the title-page, the compiler of the catalogue inserted that which appeared on the preface. I have entered into these details," adds M. Payen, "because it has been placed on record that such an edition exists; and because several literary men, who have a good deal occupied themselves upon the subject of Montaigne and his works, wishing to make up four editions previous to that of 1588, and relying upon the authority of M. de Cayla, M. de Bastide, and the Catalogue of the Library of Bordeaux, have shared in this error, which has now had general credit for nearly thirty years."

1582.

2. *The same.*—PAR MESSIRE MICHEL, SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE, chevalier de l'ordre du roy et gentilhomme de sa chambre, mayre et gouverneur de Bourdeaus.—*Edition seconde*, reveue et augmentée. *A Bourdeaus, par S. Millanges*, imprimeur ordinaire du roy, M.D.LXXXII. 8vo.

This edition, a much handsomer one than the first, is in one volume. It contains only the first two books, and has no epigraph. The pagination continues from the one book on to the other, and there is no title-page for Book II. There are 806 pages in the volume. La Boëtie's Sonnets are inserted, as in the first edition.

This edition, it is seen, is announced as *revue et augmentée;* and, in fact, each of the editions which immediately followed the first, presents corrections and augmentations; and it is particularly observable in the edition of Bordeaux, 1588, that Montaigne, notwithstanding his statement, "I add, but never correct," did correct very often, even as to light turns of expression.

1587.

3. *The same.*—Par MESSIRE MICHEL, SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE, chevalier de l'ordre du roi et gentilhomme ordinaire de sa chambre, mayre et gouverneur de Bourdeaus, reveues et augmentées. A Paris, chez Jean Richer, rue St.-Jean-de-Latran, a l'arbre verdoyant, M.D.LXXXVII. 12mo.

The date of the preface is the same as in the preceding editions; and the Sonnets of Boëtie are inserted as before. Coste, and the edition of 1725, are therefore altogether mistaken in stating, after Niceron, that Boëtie's Sonnets were not printed with the Essays till the edition of 1588.

1588.

4. *The same.*—Essais de MICHEL, SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE. *Cinquiesme edition*, augmentée d' un troisiesme livre, et de six cens additions aux deux premiers. A Paris, chez *Abel L'Angelier*, au premier pilier de la grand salle du Palais. Avec privilege du roy. 1580. 4to. 1 volume.

An engraved title-page. The date is not on the title-page, but it is in the license to print, which bears date 4th June, 1588, and is signed Duduit.

The name of Montaigne, it is seen, is not followed here by the array of his titles; and it is a curious coincidence, that among the numerous additions made to this edition is the passage (Book i. chap. 39,) expressing his objection to the *superscribing his letters with a long ribblerow of qualities and titles;* and the other passage which deprecates the "loading the fronts and title-pages of the books we commit to the press with such a clutter of titles."

This edition is only paged on the *recto*, the last page being numbered 396. The preface is dated 12th June, 1588, but it is in other respects the same as in the preceding editions. The Sonnets of Boëtie are also inserted as before. The third book, which now appeared for the first time, consists of thirteen chapters.

This edition, the last published during Montaigne's life, is of very inferior execution. The title-page announces it as the fifth edition, and as it came out under the superintendence of Montaigne himself, who was then in Paris, it would seem that four editions had, in point of fact, preceded it, yet we have no knowledge of any other editions, up to this time, than those just mentioned. When the supposed edition in folio, "Paris, 1580," was admitted, the number was complete, but it has been shown that no such edition exists. Niceron says that the first edition was followed by three others previous to that of 1588, but he does not give us the dates, and, indeed, would seem merely to make the statement upon the authority of the title-page of the present edition. If this be, indeed, the fifth edition, it is quite clear that one of the pre-

ceding editions has altogether escaped the research of bibliographers.

It was from a copy of this edition, corrected and augmented by Montaigne himself, that Naigeon published the edition of 1802. M. Bernadau, advocate at Bordeaux, and author of the *Antiquites Bordelaises*, made known this copy to the public in a letter addressed to the *Journal General de France* (Nov. 1789). This copy remained some time in the family of Montaigne, and then, according to M. Bernadau, "was given to the Feuillans of Bordeaux by Madame de Montaigne, by order of her husband, who was greatly attached to that society, and had selected their church as his place of sepulture. The author of the *Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique* is therefore wrong, when he says there is to be seen, in the library of that convent, a manuscript supplement to the Essays. This precious relic, at the time of the Revolution, was transferred to the public library of Bordeaux, where it still remains.

This copy is covered with corrections and additions, marginal and interlineary, in the handwriting of Montaigne. On the engraved title-page, he has written *sixieme edition*, in reference to the one he then contemplated, and this, indeed, puts it beyond a doubt that the edition now under notice is the fifth, and that we have altogether lost sight of one of the preceding impressions. Among other manuscript additions which Montaigne made to the copy in question, there is a page of directions to the printer, occupying the back of the title-page.

He also added, on the title-page, this epigraph, which has since become that of his book: *Viresque acquirit eundo.* At the top of the title-page is an escutcheon, in which he has written his name.

1593.

5. Livre des Essais de Michel, seigneur de Montaigne, divisé en deux parties. *Derniere edition*, augmentée de deux tables tres amples des choses plus memorables conteneues en icelle: *à Lyon*, pour *Gabriel Lagrange*, libraire d'Avignon. M.D.XCIII. 8vo.

Conformably to the title, this edition is divided into two parts. The first comprises the first two books, in 830 pages, and is preceded by the above title; the second, which contains the third book, is preceded by a separate title: Livre des Essais de Michel, seigneur de Montaigne, *deuxieme partie, à Lyon, &c.* Each part has a table of chapters, and an analytical table of contents. The running title is "*Essais de Monta.*" (*sic.*) This edition, which is a very fair one, is printed from that of 1588. M. Payen says he has seen two copies of it; one in the public library of Chaumont en Bassigny, the other in that of M. Lamennais; in the first, which no doubt had belonged to some convent, the

whole chapter, "On some Verses of Virgil" is taken out, a mutilation which is found in a great many copies of these old editions.

1595.

6. *The same.*—Edition nouvelle, trouvée apres le décèds de l'autheur; reveue et augmentée par lui d'un tiers plus qu'aux precedentes impressions. *Paris, Abel l'Angelier*, 1595. Folio. Some copies have: "*Paris, Michel Sonnius, Rue St. Jacques, a 'Ecu de Basle.*" The license, at the back of the title-page, is dated 15th October, 1594.

There is no epigraph, and the preface, by Montaigne, is omitted. The chapter, "That the Relish of Good and Evil," &c., which hitherto had formed the fourteenth of the First Book, is here, as in all the subsequent editions, except the following, the fortieth of the same book.

This edition was printed, under the care of Mademoiselle de Gournay, from a copy, revised by Montaigne, and given to Mademoiselle de Gournay by his widow. This was probably a copy of the edition of 1588, corrected and augmented in the same way with the copy already described; for Mademoiselle de Gournay says, on this subject: "Madame de Montaigne sent them to me to have published, enriched with his latest improvements." Another copy remained in the house of Montaigne, as Mademoiselle de Gournay informs us, and this was the copy afterwards given to the Feuillans of Bordeaux. Mons. de Bernadau, therefore, in the letter above quoted, is mistaken in describing the copy in the library at Bordeaux as that from which Mademoiselle de Gournay printed her edition. It is not known what became of this latter copy, which differed materially from that used by M. Naigeon; it is probable that, after the work had gone through the press, the copy was not preserved.

This, and the impression of *Anvers* (no date), are the only editions which do not contain Montaigne's preface; in the edition next mentioned, indeed, Mademoiselle de Gournay says, that the preface was mislaid when they were printing the edition now under notice. The Editor has preceded the Essays with a long and able apologetic preface, reprinted in the present edition. Mademoiselle de Gournay herself revised all the proofs of this edition, which is executed with such correctness, that she is well entitled to call it, as she did in the edition of 1635, *le vieil et bon exemplaire.* It remains to this day the principal edition, as regards authenticity of text, and one of the handsomest in a typographical point of view.

1595.

7. Les Essais de Michel, seigneur de Montagne, (*sic.*) divisez en trois livres contenants un riche et rare thrésor de plu-

sieurs beaux et notables discours, couchez en un stile le plus pur et orné qu'il se trouve en nostre siècle, avec deux tables, l'un des chapitres, l'autre des choses plus mémorables conteneues en iceux. CIↃ.IↃ.XCV. Pour *François Le Febure* de *Lyon*. 12mo.

The preface of Montaigne is here addressed *au lecteur benevole!* and is dated the 18th March, 1590. The analytical table is in tolerable detail. This edition, a very incorrect and badly-executed one, contains the three books of the Essays, but not the additions made to the folio edition of the same year, just noticed. Its text is taken from that of 1588; but it is far less complete. Whole chapters are omitted, and those which are retained are disfigured throughout with horrible mutilations.

This edition is unquestionably the worst ever published.

1598.

8. *The same.*—Edition nouvelle, prise sur l'exemplaire trouvé apres le décèds de l'autheur, reveue et augmentée d'un tiers plus qu'aux precedentes impressions; *Paris*, *Abel L'Angelier*, *au premier pilier de la Grande Salle du Palais.* M.D.XCVIII. large octavo. An engraved title-page, bearing on it for the first time the *viresque acquirit eundo.* 1164 pages. The same *privilege* as to the edition of 1595. A very fine edition.

The preface of Montaigne is again introduced here; it is dated 1st March, 1580, and is followed by a note, stating that this preface, corrected by the last hand of the author, having been mislaid at the time of the first impression after the author's death, had since been found and inserted; and, in point of fact, it does somewhat differ from the preface to the preceding editions.

The preface by Mademoiselle de Gournay, which was printed in the edition last noticed, is here omitted.

This edition is the first in which we find the *viresque acquirit eundo*, already spoken of, which it was obviously the intention of the author should in future serve as the epigraph to his work; and we accordingly find it printed in all the subsequent editions, with two or three exceptions, up to those of 1659 exclusive.

It is not till the edition of 1635 that we find the motto which Montaigne had adopted, the *Que sais-je*, with the emblem of the scales; and in this edition we have both the epigraph and the motto, as is the case in several of the subsequent editions.

1600.

9. *The same.*—Edition nouvelle, prise sur l'exemplaire trouvé apres le décèds de l'autheur, reveue et augmentée d'un tiers outre les precedentes impressions; *Paris*, *Abel L'Angelier*, M.D.C. Large 8vo.

Preface, notes, privilege, epigraph, engraved title-page, all the same as in the edition of 1598. 1166 pages.

Not so fine an edition as the preceding, but still a very good and handsome one.

Chapter 21, of book ii., is entitled, in the Table of Contents, "Contre la fainéantise," as in the preceding editions; in the body of the work it is misprinted "Contre la fantasie."

1602.

10. Coste, in his preface to the edition of 1739, mentions an edition at Paris, of this date, different from the one next noticed, and which he describes as a fine one. Brunet, Fournier, Cailleau, also mention this edition; and I have seen it named in the catalogue of the first sale of M. Dinocourt d'Hangard (drawn up by Née de la Rochelle, 1789), No. 332. I have not seen this edition myself, but, after the authority I have given, there can be no doubt that such an edition exists, and the following would appear to be its description:—

The same.—Title as before. *Paris*, Abel L'Angelier, 1602. A fine edition, conformable to the two preceding, containing in addition, at the end, the Sonnet of Expilly, from the 12mo. edition of 1595. This last feature, indeed, proves the existence of this edition, as differing from those of 1598 and 1600, neither of which contains the sonnet.

11. *The same.* Title-page as in the edition of 1598. *Leyde, Jean Doreau*, 1602, 8vo. (a smaller 8vo. than the three preceding editions.) Printed title-page. Epigraph. 1132 pages. Ornamented initial letters to each chapter. Both prefaces, and the short note to that of Montaigne, as in the preceding editions; also an analytical table, the first since that of 1595, in 12mo.

Chapter 21, book ii., is here also headed "Contre la fantasie."

12. There is a counterfeit of this edition, purporting to be by the same bookseller, of the same town, and the same date. On comparing the pagination, the initial letters, and the typographical errors, it becomes matter of certainty that the present is a different edition from the preceding. The two editions, indeed, may at once be distinguished by the title-pages; for in the preceding impression, the E in the exemplar word is a capital, whereas in the present edition it is italic. The edition now under notice, which in no respect equals the preceding, has no analytical table.

1604.

13. *The same.*—*Edition nouvelle*, prise sur l'exemplaire trouvé apres le décèds de l'autheur, reveue et augmentée d'un tiers, outre les précédentes impressions, enrichie de deux tables curieusement exactes et élabourées; *viresque acquirit eundo; à Paris*, chez *Abel L'Angelier*, au premier pilier de la Grande Salle du Palais MDCIV.

Engraved title-page. The epigraph. Note of Madlle. de Gournay to the Preface by Montaigne. Ornamented initial letters to each chapter. 1032 pages. The analytical table, and at the end an additional table of the illustrations of the Life of Montaigne, as given by himself in the Essays. Here also, chap. 21, book ii., is entitled "Contre la Faineantise."

A good edition, though not so large or handsome as the preceding, published in 8vo. by the same bookseller. There are no marginal lemmas. In the British Museum there is a handsome edition in 4to., dated 1608, the title-page of which exactly corresponds, in all other respects, with that now given under the year 1604.

1608.

14. Coste mentions an edition of this date, and describes it as a good one. I have not met with it, says M. Payen, but I believe it exists, for the edition of 1611 contains an extract of the license granted, 23*d March*, 1608, *to Charles Sevestre and Jean Petitpas* which confirms Coste's statement. The edition would appear to be in 8vo., and from the details of the license was described as "*enrichie et augmentée, outre les précédentes impressions, de petits sommaires en la marge, des choses plus remarquables, avec une table très ample, et la vie de l'autheur.*"—This is the first time we meet with two of the additional features which are found in the subsequent editions.

1609.

15. *The same.—Nouvelle edition*, &c. (as in the preceding.) Leyde, Jean Doreau. 8vo. 1609.

Printed title-page. The epigraph. Preface of Montaigne, with Mad. de Gournay's note. The preface of the latter. Ornamented initial letters to each chapter. Analytical tables entitled "Les pages du Sieur de Montaigne," &c., as in 1602. Chapter 21 of book ii. is here headed, "Contre la faineantise." 1132 pages. The Index has no pagination.

1611.

16. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, enrichie d'annotations en marge, corrigée et augmentée d'un tiers outre les précédentes impressions, avec une table très ample des noms et matières remarquables et signalées, plus la vie de l'autheur, extraite de ses propres écrits. *Paris*, avec privilége du roy (1608). Chez *François Gueffier*, rue Saint-Jean-de-Latran, devant le collége de Cambray. 1611. 8vo.

Engraved title-page. The epigraph. The two prefaces. Mad. de Gournay's note is omitted. A summary notice of the Life of Montaigne. Marginal lemmas. References to the authors quoted.

Extract from the royal license (see 1608). Ornamented initial letters to each chapter. 1130 pages. No pagination of the table of contents. This edition contains, for the first time, a portrait of Montaigne, engraved by Thomas de Leu.

Some copies of this edition bear the name of *Charles Sevestre, Rue St. Jacques, devant les Mathurins.* In these the date of the edition occupies the place in which, in Gueffier's copies, is the date of the license.

Other copies have: "Chez Jean Petitpas, Rue Saint-Jean-de-Latran, au College Cambray."

1614.

17. Though I have met with no edition of 1614, I am persuaded that there is one in existence of that date, and I found this opinion upon these circumstances:—1. In the edition of 1617 the publisher's preface says: "Reader, we present thee the Essays, once more furnished with translations of the Latin;" it is therefore clear that there exists an edition anterior to 1617, in which the quotations are translated, and we find no such translations in any other edition preceding that of 1617. 2. The license of the latter edition is dated 1614, and it is very improbable that the publishers would have waited three years before they made use of it.

This license, which is also inserted in the edition of 1617, is granted to Mademoiselle de Gournay, and she afterwards transferred it to François Gueffier; Jean Petitpas, Charles Sevestre, Michel Nivelle, and Claude Rigaud. It was, then, by these booksellers that this edition must have been published, and the form was probably 8vo., since the editions sent forth by the same publishers, in 1617 and 1625, are in this size. This edition would contain marginal lemmas, or summaries, references to authors quoted, the Life of Montaigne, and, for the first time, translations of the Latin passages.

1616.

18. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, &c. (as in the edition of 1600.) A *Cologne*, par Philippe Albert, 1616, in 8vo.

The short preface by Mademoiselle de Gournay. Her note to Montaigne's preface. Analytical index, headed the same as that of 1602. Printed title-page, bearing the fleurs-de-lis. Ornamented initial letters. 1132 pages. The index not paged. Chapter 21, book ii. is headed, "Contre la Faineantise." There is a separate analytical index to the Life of Montaigne. This edition has neither the epigraph *vires*, nor any marginal lemmas or references to authors.

In some copies of this edition the word Cologne is erased, and over it is printed the word Geneva.

1617.

19. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, enrichie d'annotations en marge, du nom des auteurs cités et de la version du latin d'iceux, corrigée et augmentée, &c. *Paris*, Charles Sevestre, en l'isle du Palais, aux Trois Perruques, devant le Cheval de Bronze. 1617. 4to.

The title-page printed in red and black. The epigraph. The portrait as in the edition of 1611. Notice by the printers. Life of Montaigne. The long preface by Mad. de Gournay. Summaries and references to the authors, in the margin. Extract from the license dated 28th November, 1614. Four indicia:—1. Index of chapters; 2. Analytical table, headed the same as that of the edition of Leyden of 1602; 3. Index to the proper names of men, nations, animals, towns, &c.; 4. Index to the various passages in the work which refer to the Life of Montaigne. Notice to the reader, by Mademoiselle de Gournay, relating to the translation of nearly all the Greek and Latin quotations, which are collected together at the end of the volume, in the order in which they occur in the body of the work. Lastly, a literal copy of the Latin epitaph engraved upon the tomb which had been dedicated to Montaigne in the Church of the Feuillans at Bordeaux. Coste, therefore, is wrong in stating, as he does, in his edition of 1739, that this epitaph first appeared in the edition of Paris, of 1725, in 4to.

All the editions anterior to this, except that in 12mo., of 1595, invariably have the name *Montaigne;* in the present edition it is alternately *Montagne* and *Montaigne.*

I have met with copies of this edition, with the name: *Paris, Michel Nivelle*, Rue St. Jacques, aux Signes; and others: *Paris*, pour *Claude Rigaud*, libraire, demeurant a Lyon. Other copies have the names of the booksellers, *Guefflier* and *Petitpas.* See further, as to this edition, that of 1625.

1617.

20. *The same.*—(Title as in that of 1611.) *Rouen, Manassez de Preaulx*, devant le portail des libraires, 1617. 8vo.

Portrait and frontispiece as in the edition of 1611. The epigraph *vires*, &c. The short preface of Mademoiselle de Gournay. Summaries and references to authors in the margin. Ornamental initial letters. 1130 pages.

Some copies have the address: *Rouen*, chez Jean Osmon, dans la Cour du Palais.

1619.

21. *The same.—Rouen*, chez *la Veuve de Thomas Daré*, devant l'Esperance. 8vo. Engraved title-page. Portrait. 1130 pages.

Summaries, &c., in the margin. Edition similar to those of 1602,–8,–11,–16,–17.

22. *The same.*—1619, in 8vo. Edition differing from the preceding. Analytical Table. 1130 pages. Life of Montaigne. Summaries, &c., in the margin.

1625.

23. *The same. Paris, Robert Bertauld*, 1625. 4to.

Some copies have the name: *Veuve Remy Dallin*, au mont et image Saint-Hilaire; others, *Charles Hulpeau*, demeurant au bout du Pont St. Michel, a l'image Saint Jean; others: *Gilles et Robinot.*

The present edition contains no indexes, or portrait, nor the epitaph, which are all to be found in the edition of 1617. Both these editions are very incorrect. The edition of 1625, however, is still more incorrect even than that of 1617; and neither of them has any interest attachable to it, except from the circumstance of the reappearance of Mademoiselle de Gournay's preface, different in each of these editions, and different from what it was in 1595, and from what it was to be in 1635.

1627.

24. *The same.—Rouen*, Robert Valentin, dans la Cour du Palais, 1627, 8vo. Some copies are printed: "Chez Jacques Colloué, dans la Cour du Palais;" others: "Chez Guillaume de la Haye, dans L'Estre Notre Dame."

Engraved title-page. The epigraph *vires*, &c. The short preface of Mademoiselle de Gournay. The portrait of 1611.

Summaries and references to authors in the margins. Analytical index. 1130 pages.

Edition conformable with those of 1602,–9,–11,–16,–17,–19,–36,–49.

I have seen several copies of this edition, in which the 2 in the date has been turned into a 9; and some of these are so skilfully managed that it was very difficult to recognize the 1627 in the forged 1697.

1635.

25. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, exactement corrigée selon le vray exemplaire; enrichie à la marge des noms des autheurs cités et de la version de leurs passages, mise à la fin de chaque chapitre, avec la vie de l'autheur; plus deux tables, l'une des chapitres et l'autre des principales matières. *Paris*, Jean Camusat, Rue St. Jacques, à la Toison d'Or; M.D.CXXXV. Folio.

Some copies have the name "Toussaint du Bray, Rue St. Jacques, aux Espics Meurs, et Pierre Rocolet, Imprimeur Ordi-

naire du Roi, au Palais, en la Galerie des Prisonniers, aux armes de la Ville."

Other copies merely have on the title-page: "Paris, M.D.CXXXV. Avec privilege du Roy."

The first title is printed in red and black letters; after this comes an engraved title-page, in the centre of which is a portrait of Montaigne; at the top you read: LES ESSAIS DE MICHEL, SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE, and right and left, on two floating streamers, on one side: *Vires acquirit eundo*, and on the other: *Unum pro cunctis;* beneath the portrait are the scales, and the *Que scais je?* which appear here for the first time. At the bottom is the name—"*Paris*, Camusat, 1635," in the copies published by this bookseller; and in those sent forth by others, there is simply, Paris, Rue St. Jacques et au Palais. The copies by Camusat, also have, on the right and left, armorial bearings, apparently purporting to be those of Montaigne, but they are incorrect; and at the back of the last page there is the King's license, printed in complete form, while the copies bearing the name of the other booksellers only give an extract from this license, and have not got the arms. After the license comes the transfer which Mademoiselle de Gournay made of it to Jean Camusat. This edition was superintended by Mademoiselle de Gournay herself, who dedicates it to the Cardinal de Richelieu.

This edition contains: the Essays; the dedication; the long preface by Mademoiselle Gournay; Montaigne's preface, dated 1st March, 1580; a summary of the Life of Montaigne; translations of the Latin quotations, placed at the end of each chapter; analytical index. There are no summaries in the margin, but only references to the authors quoted.

This edition of the Essays, remarks M. Payen, has been placed on an equality with that of 1595; indeed some bibliographers even give it the preference, and amongst the latter number I find the learned M. Weiss. Though I accord to the edition of 1595 the preference over that of 1635, still the latter edition is one of the best we have of the Essays; the print and paper are tolerably good, though inferior to the edition of 1595; while it possesses over the latter what some persons will consider the material advantage of containing translations of the quotations. The copies published by Camusat are the best, inasmuch as they contain the whole of the King's License, of which the other copies only give an extract.

1636.

26. *The same.—Dernière Edition*, enrichie d'annotations en marge, corrigée suivant les premieres impressions. *Paris, Salomon de la Fosse.* M.D.C.XXXVI. 8vo.

Some copies bear the name of *Pierre Lamy;* others that of

Guillaume Loyson, au Palais, en la Galerie des Prisonniers, au Nom de Jesus; others that of *Michel Blageart.*

Title printed in red and black. The epigraph *vires*, &c. The preface of Montaigne, and the short one by Mademoiselle de Gournay. Summary of the Life of Montaigne. Ornamented initial letters to most of the chapters. 1130 pages, without the Index.

Edition corresponding with those of 1608, 1609, 1611, &c. See under 1649.

1640.

27. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, corrigée suivant les premieres impressions de l'Angelier, et augmentée d'Annotations en marge de toutes les matieres les plus remarquable, avec la Vie de l'Auteur. Paris, Michel Blageart, rue de la Calandre, a la Fleur de Lys, pres le Palais. 1640. *Folio.*

Title-page in red and black, in the centre of which is the portrait of Montaigne. No epigraph. No preface by Mademoiselle de Gournay. Summary of the life. Analytical Index. Summaries in the margins. References to authors. No translation of the quotations. A good edition, the copies of which, on large paper, are very fine.

It is seen that the title-page indicates that the edition is printed "suivant les premieres impressions de l'Angelier," a sufficient evidence that the alterations made by Mademoiselle de Gournay, in the edition she inscribed to Richelieu, were not generally approved of.

I find among my notes, says M. Payen, a reference to an edition in folio of this date, *Paris, Augustin Courbé, à la Palme*, which is probably the edition under notice, with a different title-page.

1641.

28. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, enrichie d'annotations en marge, corrigée et augmentée d'un tiers, outre les precedentes impressions, avec une table tres ample des noms et des matieres remarquables et signalées; plus la vie de l'auteur, extraite de ses propres ecrits. *Rouen*, chez *Jean Berthelin*, dans la Cour du Palais. 1641. 8vo.

Engraved title-page, having in the upper part a portrait of Montaigne, with allegories, signed F. Honeruogh. The epigraph. The short preface by Mademoiselle de Gournay. Summaries and references to authors in the margin. Ornamental initial letters to the chapters. 1130 pages. Edition corresponding with those of 1608, 1611, &c. (See under 1649.)

Some copies of this edition have the name *à Rouen*, chez *Jacques Besongue, dans la Cour du Palais.* No date.

1649.

29. *The same.—Derniere edition*, enrichie d'annotations en marge, avec une table tres ample des matieres. *Paris, Michel Blageart*, au bout du Pont Neuf, au coin de la rue Dauphine. 1649. 8vo.

A reprint of the folio edition of the same publisher. Title printed in red and black, the epigraph misprinted *utriusque* ACQUIRIT EUNDO. The preface of Mademoiselle de Gournay is omitted. 1130 pages. Vignettes, with fleur-de-lis, at the commencement of the life, and of the first two chapters. There is a vignette also, but of a different design, at the head of the third chapter. Ornamented initial letters to the chapters.

30. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, &c. (same title as 1641), *à Anvers*, chez *Abraham Maire*. No date. 8vo.

Engraved title-page, and portrait as in the editions of 1608, 1611, &c. Neither Montaigne's nor de Gournay's preface. Summaries and authors' names in the margin. This edition is a different one from those of 1608, 1611, &c., though it resembles them in many particulars.

31. I have met with a copy of an edition of Montaigne similar to those of 1608, 1611, &c., yet a different edition from those; but the title-page was missing, so that I could not ascertain either the name, place, or date. 1130 pages. Ornamental initial letters to the chapters. The prefaces, life, marginal summaries, analytical index, are the same as in the previously described editions; but that which distinguishes the present edition from its predecessors is a vignette, with fleur-de-lis, at the head of Book II., and other vignettes before the other two Books, the Life, the Prefaces, &c.

With reference to the editions hitherto described, M. Payen remarks: "Toutes les editions qui precedent, excepté la premiere, sont en un seul volume; mais parmi elles il en est plusieurs qui semblent être une succession de reimpression les unes des autres."

1652.

32. *The same.—Nouvelle édition*, exactement purgée des défauts des précédentes, selon le vrai original, et enrichie et augmentée aux marges du nom des autheurs qui y sont citez et de la version de leurs passages, Grecs et Latins; avec des observations très importantes et nécessaires pour le soulagement du lecteur, ensemble la vie de l'autheur et deux tables, l'une des chapitres et l'autre des principales matieres de beaucoup plus amples et plus utiles que celles des dernieres editions, avec augmentation de la version françoise de passages italiens. *Paris, Augustin Courbé*, au Palais, en la galerie des Merciers, à la Palme, 1652. Folio.

The first title-page is printed in red and black characters, with a vignette representing a palm-tree, and the motto (in allusion to

the bookseller's name) *Resurgo curvata.* The second title is an engraved one, with a portrait, the same as that in the edition of 1635. Instead of the name of Camusat, however, we have here the following: *Rue St. Jacques et au Palais*, 1652. There is a vignette, with fleurs-de-lis, at the head of all the three books, and of the preface by de Gournay. Some copies bear the name of *Pierre Rocolet;* others of *Veuve Sebastien Hurè, et Sebastien Hurè, rue St. Jacques, au Cœur-Bon.* In these copies the emblem of the palm-tree is replaced by that of the tree of the Stephens', with the *noli altum sapere.*

This edition contains, besides the Essays, the long preface and dedication of de Gournay; the preface of Montaigne; a summary of his life; references to authors in the margin, and translations of the passages quoted; the whole preceded by a notice by the printer, Henry Stephen, in which he details the improvements he has made in this edition, more especially in placing the translations opposite the text, the first time of this arrangement being introduced.

The license granted to Henry Stephen bears date 3d of May; and it is followed by a note, stating that the printer has made an agreement, for this edition only, with the booksellers Courbé and Le Petit. It is therefore probable that some copies bear the name of the latter bookseller.

1657.

33. *The same.—Edition nouvelle* (rest of title same as the edition of 1652). *Paris, Jean Baptiste Loyson*, Rue St.-Jacques, pres la Poste, à la Croix Rouge. Folio, 840 pages. Some copies have the names: *Jacques Langlois et Emmanuel Langlois;* others: *Pierre Lamy*, au Grand Cesar; others: *Pierre Rocolet*, imprimeur-ordinaire du Roi et de la Maison-de-Ville, au Palais, en la galerie des Prisonniers; others: *la Veuve Marin Dupuis*, rue St.-Jacques, a la Couronne d'Or; others: *Sebastien Huré et Frederic Leonard;* others: *Edme Coulerot*, rue St.-Jacques, au Bon Pasteur et à la Bible d'Or. The first title is printed in red and black, with the emblem and motto of the Stephens; the second title is engraved, with the portrait of 1635 and 1652. At the bottom there is merely *Rue St.-Jacques;* and *Au Palais.* There is the license of 1651 prefixed, with a note of Henry Stephen, stating that he has transferred his rights, for this edition, to Le Petit and Hué, so that it is probable there are some copies bearing the name of the former bookseller. This edition is a reprint of the preceding, and would at first sight appear to be the same; but, besides several other differences, the present volume has this distinct statement: Achevé d'imprimer pour la deuxieme fois, 1er Octobre 1657.

1659.

34. *The same.*—Nouvelle edition, enrichie et augmentée aux

marges du nom des autheurs qui y sont citez, avec la version des passages grecs, latins, et italiens. *Paris*, Christophe Journel, rue Vielle Bouclerie, au bout du Pont-St.-Michel, a l'image St.-Jean; 1659. 12mo. 3 vols.

Each volume has an engraved title-page, with the engraver's name, N. de Larmessin; portrait of Montaigne, and beneath it the scales and the *Que scais-je?* Montaigne's preface. Dedication to Richelieu. De Gournay's long preface. Life of Montaigne. In the margins, summaries, references to authors, and translations of the passages quoted. Each volume comprises one book of the Essays, and has a table of chapters and a table of contents. The Sonnets of La Boëtie are not printed in this edition. This edition is the first, since that of 1580, which forms more than one volume; the appearance of its typography is neat enough, but it is by no means irreproachable as to correctness of text.

Montaigne's preface here is headed: "*Avertissement de l'autheur, insere en toutes les precedentes editions*," which is a mistake, for this preface does not appear, either in the edition of 1595 or in that of Antwerp.

35. *The same.—Nouvelle edition*, exactement purgée des defauts des precedentes, et augmentée aux marges du nom des autheurs qui y sont cités et de la version de leurs passages, avec des observations tres importantes et necessaires pour le soulagement du lecteur; ensemble la vie de l'autheur et deux tables, l'une des chapitres, et l'autre des principales matieres, de beaucoup plus ample et plus utile que celle des dernieres editions. *Bruxelles*, François Foppens, libraire et imprimeur. M.D.CLIX.; or *Amsterdam*, *Antoine Michiels*, libraire.

The title-page is printed in red and black, and is preceded in the first volume by an engraved frontispiece, signed P. Chouwet, in the centre of which is Montaigne's portrait, with the scales and the *Que scais-je*. Above it is: LES ESSAIS DE MICHEL, SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE; and beneath, "mis (*sic*) en 3 vol."

Besides the contents detailed in the title-page, this edition comprises the dedication to Richelieu, De Gournay's long preface, and a summary of the Life of Montaigne. At the end of the preliminary matter are two quotations from the writings of Justus Lipsius, in praise of Montaigne.

The heading to the preface by Montaigne has the same mistake which is pointed out in the preceding article. In vol. 3, there is a general analytical table, much more convenient than the three separate indexes in the preceding edition.

This edition is greatly esteemed and sought after, on account of its typographical beauty.

There has been considerable discussion as to the printer of this edition. Those who wish to study the question more at length may consult the "Essai Bibliographique sur les editions des Elzévirs, par M. Bérard," and the "Melanges tirés d'une petite Bibliothèque, par M. Ch. Nodier."

1669.

36. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, &c. (same as in title-page of the edition of Paris, 1659.) *Paris, Laurent Rondet, Christophe Journel, et Robert Chevillon.* M.D.C.LXIX. 3 vols. 12mo.

A reprint of the edition of Journel, containing the same pieces.

37. *The same.—Nouvelle edition, &c.* (as in the edition of Foppens.) *Lyon, André Olyer*, Rue Tupin, à la Providence. 1669. 3 vols. 12mo.

Some copies have: *Lyon*, Ant. Besson, Rue Tupin, proche L'Empereur. In the first volume is an engraved frontispiece, signed N. Auroux, copied from that in the editions of Foppens. The second title, which is printed in black and red in the first volume, and in black only in the two others, has, in Olyer's copies, a vignette, representing a woman holding up towards the sun a sphere, surmounted by a cross; Besson's copies have neither vignette nor date. This edition, in all other respects, is conformable to that of Holland, 1659. There is a third title-page, engraved, containing a portrait of Montaigne, with *Les Essais de Montaigne*, at top; the epigraph and the scales; and in a shield, "Mis (*sic*) en 3 vols."

1724.

38. *The same.—Nouvelle édition*, faites sur les plus anciennes et les plus correctes, augmentées de quelques lettres de l'autheur, et ou les passages grecs, latins, et italiens sont traduits plus fidelement et cités plus exactement que dans aucune des editions precedentes, avec de courtes remarques et de nouveaux indices plus amples et plus utiles que ceux qui avaient paru jusqu'ici; par *Pierre Coste, Londres*, de l'imprimerie de J. Tonson et J. Watts. 1724. 4to. 3 vols.

Editor's preface. Marginal summaries. A variety of notes by the editor, historical, critical, and explanatory of obscure passages and obsolete phrases. At the end of the third volume are printed seven letters written by Montaigne, viz: the five which appeared in the volume of translations of La Boëtie; a sixth addressed to Mademoiselle Paulmier; and a seventh taken from Montaigne's translation of Sebond. Analytical table of contents. At the beginning of the work there is a portrait of Montaigne, engraved after Genest, by Chereau, beneath which are the scales, the *Que scais-je?*, and the arms of Montaigne, taken from the edition of 1635, and consequently altogether inexact.

This edition, printed from that of L'Angelier, 1595, is one of the best and finest that we possess of Montaigne. To it should be added a supplement, which was published in London, in 1740, under the title of: SUPPLEMENT AUX ESSAIS DE MICHEL, SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE. *Londres*, G. Darres and J. Brindley, 1740, 4to. Some later copies of this work are entitled, ME-

MOIRES POUR SERVIR AUX ESSAIS DE MICHEL, SEIGNEUR DE MONTAIGNE, deuxieme edition; *Londres*, G. Darres, C. Du Bosc, et J. Brindley. 1741.

This supplement, which consists of ninety-six pages, comprises the various additions made by Coste to the edition which he published in 1739. These are: 1st, Notice from the publishers, taken principally from the preface of Coste to his edition of 1739; 2d, the Life of Montaigne, by the President Bouhier; 3d, the parallel between Epictetus and Montaigne, by Pascal; 4th, the *Servitude Volontaire*, by La Boëtie; 5th, Expilly's Sonnet on Montaigne; and a note upon Arius and his Pope Leo, by Barbeyrac.

It is this supplement which is dedicated to the President Bouhier, and not the edition of 1725, as M. Beuchot incorrectly states, in his life of Bouhier, in the *Biographie Universelle*.

1725.

39. *The same.*—Donnés sur les plus anciennes et les plus correctes éditions; augmentés de plusieurs lettres de l'auteur; et où les passages grecs, latins, et italiens, sont traduits plus fidelement, et cités plus exactement, que dans aucune des precedentes. Avec des notes et des nouvelles tables des matières, beaucoup plus utiles que celles qui avaient paru jusqu'ici. Par P. Coste. Nouvelle edition, plus ample et plus correctes que la derniere de Londres. *Paris, par la Societe*, MDCCXXV. 4to. 3 vols. Title-page printed in red and black; portrait by Chereau, different from those of 1724, with the scales, the *Que scais-je?* and the correct arms of Montaigne. In addition to the contents of the London edition, this edition comprises: 1. A notice from the publishers, setting forth the improvements they have introduced; 2. Madlle. de Gournay's preface, and dedication to Richelieu, and the summary of Montaigne's Life; 3. The two epitaphs on Montaigne, one in Latin prose, and the other in Greek verse, with a translation of the latter into Latin verse; 4. The sonnets of La Boëtie, which had not been printed in any edition since that of 1588; 5. Two additional letters by Montaigne; 6. Some additional notes at the end of the 3d volume; and 7. The opinions of a number of eminent men upon Montaigne. This edition, which Coste preferred to his own of 1724, is supposed to have been produced under the care of M. Gueullette and M. Jamet the elder. This edition, however, though as good in many respects, and more complete, than that of 1724, is not so handsome as the latter, nor by any means so much sought after. The supplement of 1740 should be added to this edition also.

1727.

40. *The same.*—Third edition of Coste, Geneva, or La Haye, P. Gosse et J. Neaulme. 1727. 12mo. 5 vols. Edition conform-

able to the preceding. Title-page printed in red and black; Mademoiselle de Gournay's preface; opinions upon Montaigne by eminent writers; La Boëtie's Sonnets. Coste states that this edition is in some respects superior to that of Paris.

Fournier speaks of an edition at Geneva, in five vols. 8vo. 1725, which must be a misprint for 1727, as there is no Genevese edition of 1725.

1739.

41. *The same.*—Coste's French edition, augmented by the Life of Montaigne, and some new notes, not comprised in the editions of 1724, 1725, 1727. *Londres* (Trevoux), J. Nourse, 1739, 12mo. 6 vols. Engraved portrait, after that of 1724. Coste's preface of 1724, with an additional preface, dated 1738. Vol. 6 contains the *Servitude Volontaire*, Mademoiselle de Gournay's preface, her dedication to Richelieu, the summary of Montaigne's life, his letters, critical opinions, and analytical table. The Life of Montaigne, by the President Bouhier, is here first printed, and this edition is also the first that contains the *Servitude Volontaire.* These additions constitute the supplement printed in 4to.

An excellent and beautiful edition.

1745.

42. *The same.*—Coste's fifth edition, "corrigée et augmentée." *Londres*, Nourse, 1745. 12mo. 7 vols. An edition conformable to the preceding. The preface of 1739 is here somewhat modified, and new dated, 19th May, 1745. It describes the corrections made by Coste in the present edition. This is the best edition published by Coste, who died in 1747.

1754.

43. *The same.*—Londres (Paris), J. Nourse et Vaillant, 1754, 12mo. 10 vols. A reprint of the edition of 1745. A pretty edition, of which there are some copies in Dutch paper, which, says Brunet, are very rare.

1769.

44. *The same.*—Londres (Paris), J. Nourse et Vaillant, 1769. 12mo. 10 vols. Bordered title-page. A pretty-looking edition, but incorrect as to text. It in all other respects resembles the preceding, except that the critical opinions are somewhat abridged.

1771.

45. *The same.*—Londres (Paris), J. Nourse et Vaillant, 1771, 12mo. 10 vols. Portrait, after that of 1725; bordered title-page; reprint of the preceding edition.

1779.

46. *The same.—Genève*, Jean-Samuel Cailler, 1779; 12mo. 10 vols. Bordered title-page; edition conformable to the preceding, and quite as incorrect; it contains, in addition, the *Eloge* of Montaigne by the Abbé Talbert, canon of Besançon, a composition which obtained the prize of eloquence given by the Academy of Bordeaux in 1774, and the addition of which renders this edition preferable to the preceding.

1780.

47. *The same.—Genève*, Duvillard fils, et Nouffer, 1780, 12mo. 10 vols. Edition taken from that of Coste, and conformable to the preceding.

1781.

48. *The same.*—(Title the same as in the edition of Holland, 1659.) Amsterdam (Lyon), aux depens de la Compagnie, 1781. 8vo. 3 vols. Portrait; the "Que scais-je?" the scales, and the arms. Mademoiselle de Gournay's dedication and preface. Summary of Montaigne's life. Marginal lemmas and translations. Analytical table. The same mistake in the heading of Montaigne's preface, as in the edition of 1659. A good edition.

1783.

49. This edition is simply entitled: Essais de Michel de Montaigne. Paris, Jean-François Bastien, 1783; 3 vols. Portrait by Noel Pruneau. Of this edition 600 copies were printed in 8vo. (50 on Dutch paper), and 100 in 4to. (25 on Dutch paper.) In the copies on fine paper, each volume is divided into 2 volumes, the second volume having a bastard title, but the pagination runs on, the same as in the copies in three volumes.

This edition, which is "dediée *aux Manes respectables* de Michel de Montaigne," contains merely the text of the Essays, *purged*, as the editor expresses it, from all notes and commentaries, and without any translation of the quotations. The only additions are a preface by the *libraire-éditeur*, a summary of the life of Montaigne, and an analytical table. There are marginal summaries and references to the authors quoted; in book i. chapter 28, are La Boëtie's sonnets. An excellent edition, justly esteemed for the correctness of its text, and its exact adherence to the old orthography.

1789.

50. *The same.*—Avec les notes de M. Coste, suivis de son éloge. *Nouvelle édition.* A Genève et à Paris, chez Voland, M.DCC.LXXXIX——M.DCC.XCIII. 12mo. 10 vols.

The first four volumes appeared in 1789, the 5th and 6th in 1790, the 7th in 1791, and the last three in 1793. The first volume is on fine paper; in the succeeding volumes the quality of the paper gradually deteriorates, and that of the last two or three is detestable.

This edition is exceedingly incorrect, especially in the latter volumes. It is a reprint of Coste's edition, with the addition of Talbert's *Eloge;* but it has no analytical table.

1793.

51. *The same.—Paris, J. F. Bastien*, 1793. 8vo. 3 vols. Portrait. Reprint of Bastien's edition of 1783, but inferior to that edition in paper and print.

1796.

52. *The same.—Paris, Langlois et Gueffier*, 1796. 8vo. 4 vols. Portrait, after that of Fiquet.

The copies on Dutch paper are very fine; while those on common paper are exceedingly bad.

This edition is printed from that of Bastien, which it resembles in typography, and contains precisely the same pieces.

There are some copies on blue paper.

1801.

53. *The same.—Edition nouvelle*, où se trouvent les lettres et le discours de la Boëtie sur la *Servitude Volontaire*, ou *le Contr'un;* avec les notes de M. Coste. *Paris*, Louis, 1801. 18mo. 16 vols. Portrait after that of Fiquet. Epigraph, *Novit se ipsum.* No critical opinions.

This edition is reprinted literally from those of Coste. It is the only edition that has the epigraph, *Novit se ipsum*, though M. Vernier states that this epigraph was printed in the first edition of the Essays (1580), a mistake cited, without correction, in the *Biographie Universelle.*

1802.

54. *The same.—Edition stéréotypée* d'après le procédé de Firmin Didot.

Paris, Pierre Didot l'aîné et Firmin Didot, MDCCCII. 8vo. and 12mo. 4 vols. Portrait. Some of the copies in octavo are on vellum.

An edition justly esteemed for the correctness of its text and punctuation, which underwent the exact superintendence of M. Didot l'aîné. It contains, besides the text and Montaigne's preface, a preface by M. Naigeon, the editor, directions to the printer, written by Montaigne in a copy of the edition of 1588, whence

Naigeon edited the present edition, Montaigne's Letters, and La Boëtie's *Servitude Volontaire*. La Boëtie's Sonnets are omitted, the editor being of opinion "qu'ils ne meritent pas d'être réimprimés, parcequ'ils ne meritent pas d'être lus." The translations of the passages quoted, and references to the authors, are printed at the bottom of each page, together with various readings, and notes by Naigeon and Coste. There are no marginal summaries, nor is there any analytical table.

This edition was reprinted in 1811, 1816, 1828, 1833.

In a few copies of this edition, besides the pieces mentioned, there is a preface by Naigeon, upon Montaigne's character and religion, dated 15th *Germinal, An* x. This preface is very rare on vellum copies; on common paper it is less unusual. A copy on vellum paper, with this preface, has sold as high as 600 francs. There are but three or four copies of it on vellum, known to be in existence.

1811.

55. *The same.—Paris, P. Didot*, 4 vols. in 12mo. Reprint of the edition of 1802.

1816.

56. *The same.—Paris, Didot et Tournachon.* 4 vols. in 12mo. Reprint of the edition of 1802.

1818.

57. *The same.*—Nouvelle édition imprimée par Crapelet. *Paris, Lefevre*, 1818, 8vo. 5 vols. Portrait engraved by Al. Tardieu, after Cocaskis.

A hundred copies were printed on large paper. This edition, superintended by M. Eloi Johanneau, contains, besides the Essays, a notice to the reader; a summary of the life of Montaigne; the dedication and preface of Mad. de Gournay; La Boëtie's sonnets; a notice of his Journey into Italy, by M. Aimé St Martin; an extract from Montaigne's translation of Sebond; La Boëtie's *Servitude Volontaire;* and a table of contents. There are marginal lemmas.

The heading of Montaigne's preface has the mistake pointed out under 1659.

A good and handsome edition, the most correct and complete that had at that time ever appeared, and which still remains one of the best.

The editor has added a great number of notes, and made a selection from those of Coste.

58. *The same.*—Paris, Lefevre, 1818, 18mo. 6 vols. In the title-page is a medallion portrait, signed C. Hulot.

A reprint of the edition in 8vo., omitting M. Johanneau's preface, and the extracts from the Journey, and the translation of Sebond.

59. *The same* (edited by M. de l'Aulnaye, and printed by Fain). —Paris, Th. Desoer, 1818. 8vo. One volume in double columns. Portrait engraved by Leroux, after that of Fiquet.

This edition, of which only 500 copies were printed, contains, besides the Essays, a notice by the editor, the *Eloge* of Montaigne, by M. Jay; reflections on the character and religion of Montaigne, by Naigeon; De Gournay's preface; nine letters by Montaigne; the *Servitude Volontaire;* a glossary; and an analytical table. There are translations of the passages quoted, and references to the authors, and select notes from Coste and Naigeon.

This edition is the first, printed in one volume, since the middle of the seventeenth century, and in this respect is exceedingly convenient. It is very well printed.

60. *The same.*—Paris, *Desoer*, 1818. 18mo. 4 vols. The same portrait as in the preceding edition, to which, in all respects, except form, this edition is conformable.

1819.

61. *The same.*—Paris et Liege, Desoer, no date. 36mo. 9 vols. This edition, which, except as to form, is exactly conformable to the two preceding, forms part of the *Bibliothèque Portative du Voyageur.*

62. *The same.*—Publiés d'après l'edition la plus authentique par Amaury-Duval, Membre de l'Institut. Paris, Chasseriau, 1820–1823. 8vo. 6 vols. Portrait by Audouin.

This edition forms part of a proposed collection of the French moralists, of which series, however, only Montaigne and Charron were published.

Life of Montaigne. Critical opinions; notice of some of the principal editions of the Essays; ten letters of Montaigne; extract from Sebond's *Theologie Naturelle;* the *Servitude Volontaire;* extracts from the Journey; *Avis* de Catherine de Medicis and Charles IX. New table of contents, compiled by M. Lourmond. This edition is printed, with some few exceptions, from Naigeon's. At the head of each chapter there is a summary of the principal matters it treats of. Notes selected from Coste, Naigeon, Johanneau, with additional illustrations by the editor.

This edition was sent forth again in 1827, with fresh titles.

1822.

63. *The same.*—Mis en français moderne, auxquels on a ajouté le Discours sur l'Esclavage (la Servitude volontaire), par Etienne de la Boëtie, publiés par M. Galland. *Bruxelles, Voglet*, 5 vols. 8vo. Portrait.

"Ce n'est pas le premier projet qui ait été formé de traduire Montaigne en français moderne; mais c'est la première fois qu'il ait été suivi d'une exécution complète."

1823.

64. *The same*,—avec les notes de tous les commentateurs. *Paris*, *Lefevre* (printed by Crapelet), 1823, 8vo. 5 vols.; portrait after that of 1818.

A reprint of the edition of 1818, to which it is conformable in all respects, except that the title-page mentions no particular editor; and that M. Johanneau's preface is omitted.

It is to be remarked that although this and the following editions are described by their publishers as embodying *les notes de tous les commentateurs*, they do not, in point of fact, contain more than a selection of the notes of *all the commentators*, and hardly any two editors agree in their selection of these notes.

1825.

65. *The same*,—avec les notes de tous les commentateurs, et précédés de l'Eloge de Montaigne, par M. Villemain; *Paris*, Froment, 1825. 18mo. 8 vols. Portrait after that of Fiquet.

Short notice (not signed) by the editor. Notes from Coste, Naigeon, Duval, Johanneau, and Lefevre. *Eloge* by Villemain. Summary of the life of Montaigne. De Gournay's preface. Nine letters. The *Servitude Volontaire*. Analytical table of contents. Edition conformable to the preceding.

1826.

66. *The same*,—avec les notes de tous les commentateurs; édition publiée par J.-V. Leclerc. Paris, Lefevre (printed by Jules Didot l'aîné), 1826. 8vo. 5 vols. Portrait by Dupont.

A good and handsome edition, forming part of the *Classiques Français*, published by the same bookseller. In addition to the notes of preceding editors, M. Leclerc has added some of his own, and others taken from the commentary of M. l'Avocat-Général Servan upon the first two books of the Essays. Notice of the edition. Remarks upon the life and works of Montaigne. Notes and illustrations. Epochs of the life of Montaigne. His family. His Journey. Remarks upon the admirers and detractors of Montaigne. Ten letters. Extract from Sebond's Natural Theology. The *Servitude Volontaire*. Analytical table of contents. La Boëtie's sonnets.

1827.

67. *The same*.—*Paris*, Rapilly, 1827, 8vo.

The edition of Chasseriau, 1820, with new titles.

68. *The same*,—avec les notes de Coste, Naigeon, Amaury-Duval, Eloi Johanneau, et autres commentateurs. Paris, Menard et Desenne, 1827. 12mo. and 18mo. 10 vols. Portrait. This edition forms part of the *Bibliothèque Française*, published by the same booksellers.

Summary of Montaigne's life; dedication to Richelieu; Gournay's long preface; summaries to chapters; nine letters; the *Servitude Volontaire;* no table of contents.

1828.

69. *The same*.—Paris, H. Bossange, 1828. 8vo. 4 vols. A reprint of the edition of 1802.

70. *The same*.—Edition selon l'orthographe de l'auteur, avec les sommaires analytiques, et les notes de tous les commentateurs; précédés de la préface de Mademoiselle de Gournay et d'un précis de la vie de Montaigne. Paris, Tardieu Denesle, 1828. 8vo. 6 vols.

De Gournay's dedication to Richelieu, and La Boëtie's sonnets, are printed in this edition. The notes are selected from different commentators. There is an analytical table.

1830.

71. *The same*—(édition compacte), collationnée sur les meilleurs textes. Paris, Furne, L. Debure, 1830, royal 8vo. double columns. Some copies of this edition are dated 1831.

Villemain's *Eloge*. Nine letters; the *Servitude Volontaire;* analytical table. The notes are different from those in Desoër's edition, though Querard says it is a reprint of that edition.

1833.

72. *The same*.—Paris, Le Bigre et Firmin Didot. 8vo. 4 vols. Portrait.

A reprint of the edition of 1802.

1834.

73. *The same*,—avec les notes de tous les commentateurs. *Paris*, Lefevre, 1834. 1 vol. Royal 8vo. Double columns. Portrait after that of Leclerc's edition.

Edition printed from that of Leclerc in 1826, omitting the preliminary pieces.

1836.

74. *The same*,—avec les notes de tous les commentateurs. *Paris*, *Lefevre*, 1836. 8vo. 2 vols. Portrait after that of 1826.

The text of the Essays with notes. The letters, the *Servitude Volontaire*, and analytical table.

75. *The same*—(forming part of the *Panthéon Littéraire*) Dedication; notice of the life of Montaigne, by M. Buchan. Bibliographical notice by Doctor Payen. De Gournay's preface. The Essays. Notes selected from all the commentators. Montaigne's journey. Ten letters. Avis de Catherine de Medicis à Charles IX. The *Servitude Volontaire*. List of authors quoted. Index.

1842.

76. Essais de Michel de Montaigne.—*Nouvelle édition*, précédée d'une Lettre a M. Villemain sur L'Eloge de Montaigne, par P. Christian. Paris: Victor Lecou. 1 vol. 8vo. No portrait; no translation of the quotations; no index. A few of the earlier copies had "une Lettre *de* M. Villemain," instead of *a* M. Villemain, in the title, either by mistake or for some other cause.

1844.

77. Essais de Michel de Montaigne,—avec les notes de tous les commentateurs. Ed. publiée par J. V. Leclerc. 3 vols. in 18mo. Paris, Lefèvre. 1844.

1847.

78. Essais de Montaigne.—*Edition épurée*, précédée d'une notice par M. l'Abbé Musard, in 8vo. J. de Noel, Epernay. Publication de la Société de Saint-victor. 1847.

1853.

79. The same as 76.

1854.

80. Essais de Montaigne,—suivis de sa correspondance, et de la servitude volontaire D'Estienne de la Boëtie. Edition variorum, accompagnée d'une notice biographique, de notes historiques, philologiques, etc., et d'un index analytique; par Charles Louandre. Charpentier, Paris. 4 vols. 12mo. The text is that of Mademoiselle de Gournay in the editions of 1595 and 1635. Literal translations of the quotations are given with references at the foot of the page. There is a judicious selection from the notes of the various commentators, and notes have been added. Variations of the text are given among the foot-notes. New letters of Montaigne also appear for the first time in any edition of the Essays. The index is new, and very full, in fact so complete as to make all that precede it in the French language comparatively worthless. There are no marginal summaries, but the typography is excellent. We can sincerely recommend it to those who wish to read Montaigne in the original.

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY

OF THE

VARIOUS EDITIONS OF MONTAIGNE'S ESSAYS.

No.	Year.	Place of Pub.	Publisher.	Size.	Vol
1	1580	Bordeaux	Millanges	8vo	2
2	1582	"	"	8	1
3	1587	Paris	Richer	12	1
4	1588	"	L'Angelier	4	1
5	1593	Lyon	Lagrange	8	1
6	1595	Paris	L'Angelier Sonnius	fo.	1
7	1595	Lyon	Lefebure	12	1
8	1598	Paris	L'Angelier	8	1
9	1600	"	"	8	1
10	1602	"	"	8	1
11	1602	Leyde	Doreau	8	1
12	1602	"	"	8	1
13	1604	Paris	L'Angelier	8	1
14	1608	"	Sevestre Petitpas	8	1
15	1609	Leyde	Doreau	8	1
16	1611	Paris	Gueffier Sevestre Petitpas	8	1
17	1614	"	Gueffier Petitpas Sevestre Nivelle Rigaud	4	1
18	1616	Cologne	Albert	8	1
19	1617	Paris	Gueffier Petitpas Sevestre Nivelle Rigaud	4	1
20	1616	Rouen	Osmont Mann. de Preaulx	8	1
21	1619	"	Daré	8	
22	1619	"	Jean Durand	8	1
23	1625	Paris	Dallin Hulpeau Gilles Collet Bertauld	4	1
24	1627	Rouen	Valentin Calloué Delahaye	8	1
25	1635	Paris	Camusat Dubray Rocolet	fo.	1
26	1636	"	Lafosse Lamy Loyson Blageart	8	1
27	1640	"	"	fo.	1
28	1641	Rouen	Courbe Berthemin Besongue	8	1
29	1646	Paris	Blageart	8	1
30	1646	Envers	Maire	8	1
31	1649			8	1
32	1652	Paris	Courbé Lepetit	fo.	1
33	1657	Paris	Loyson Langlois Lamy Rocolet Dupuy Huré	fo.	1
34	1659	"	Journel	12	3
35	1659	Brussels Amsterdam	Foppens Michel	12 12	3 3
36	1669	Paris	Rondet	12	3
37	1669	Lyon	Olyer Besson	12	3
38	1724	Londres	Tonson	4	3
39	1725	Paris	la Société	4	3
40	1727	Genève La Haye	Gosse	12	5
41	1739	Londres	Nourse	12	6
42	1745	"	"	12	7
43	1754	"	"	12	10
44	1769	"	"	12	10
45	1771	"	"	12	10
46	1779	Genève	Cailler	12	10
47	1780	"	Duvillard	12	10
48	1781	Amsterdam	la Compagnie	8	3
49	1783	Paris	Bastien	8	3
50	1789	"	Voland	12	10
51	1793	"	Bastien	8	3
52	1799	"	Gueffier	8	4
53	1801	"	Louis	18	16
54	1802	"	Didot	8, 12	4
55	1811	"	"	12	4
56	1816	"	"	12	4
57	1818	"	Lefevre	8	5
58	1818	"	"	18	6
59	1818	"	Desoer	8	1
60	1818	"	"	18	4
61	1819	" Liege	"	36	9
62	1820	Paris	Chasseriau	8	6
63	1822	Bruxelles	Voglet	8	5
64	1823	Paris	Lefevre	8	5
65	1825	"	Froment	18	8
66	1826	"	Lefevre	8	5
67	1827	"	Rapilly	8	6
68	1827	"	Menard	12	10
69	1828	"	Bossange	8	4
70	1828	"	Tardieu, D	8	6
71	1830	"	Furne	8	1
72	1833	"	Lebigre	8	4
73	1834	"	Lefevre	8	1
74	1836	"	"	8	2
75	1836	"	Desrez	8	1
76	1842	"	Lecon	8	1
77	1844	"	Lefevre	18	3
78	1847	Epernay	de Noel	8	1
79	1853	Paris	Lecon	8	1
80	1854	"	Cherpentier	12	4

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

ESSAYS OF MONTAIGNE.

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1. At the head of these must be placed the edition of the Essays published at Geneva by Goulart. In the *Scaligerana Secunda*, at the article Goulart, we read: "Il a fait châtrer les œuvres de Montaigne: *Quæ audacia in scripta aliena.*" At the article Montaigne, Scaliger says, in reference to Goulart: "Ceux de Genève ont été bien impudents d'en ôter plus d'un tiers."

2. Réponse à plusieurs injures et railleries écrites contre Michel, seigneur de Montaigne, dans un livre intitulé la Logique, ou l'Art de penser, avec un beau traité de l'education des enfants et cinq cents excellents passages, tirés du livre des Essais, pour montrer le mérite de cet auteur (by Guillaume *Béranger*, but published anonymously), *Rouen*, *Laurens Maurry*, 1667, 12mo.

3. *The same.*—With the author's name. *Paris*, *J. Thoury*, *P. Dêbats et Augvstin Besongue*, 1668, 12mo.

This volume is now extremely rare; it is not in the King's Library at Paris, but it is in the British Museum, in the Library Sainte-Geneviève at Paris, and in the Public Library at Bordeaux.

4. *L'Esprit des Essais de Michel*, seigneur de Montaigne. *Paris*, *Charles de Sercy*, 1677, 12mo. Engraved frontispiece, with portrait, and the *Que sçais-je?* Printed title-page.

5. *Pensées de Montaigne*, propres à former l'esprit et les mœurs. A Paris, chez Anisson, Directeur de l'imprimerie Royale, rue de la Harpe, 1700, 1 vol. 12mo.

6. *The same.*—Seconde édition, considérablement augmentée, *Amsterdam*, *Henri Desbordes et Etienne Roger*, 1701, small 12mo.

7. *The same.*—*Amsterdam*, 1703, *Henri Desbordes* au Kalvestraat, 12mo.

8. *The same.*—*Paris*, nouvelle édition, imprimerie bibliographique, au XIII (1805), 12mo.

9. *L'Esprit de Montaigne*, ou les Maximes, pensées, jugements et réflexions de cet auteur, rédigés par ordre de matières (by

Pesselier). Berlin (Paris), Etienne de Bordeaux, 1753, 12mo. 2 vols.

10. *The same.*—Nouvelle édition. *Berlin* et *Paris. Rozet*, 1767, 12mo. 2 vols.

Same edition as the preceding; there are only the titles changed.

11. *The same.—Londres*, 1783, 18mo. 2 vols. Portrait.

12. L'Ami des Jeunes Gens, ou Guide pour les conduire dans la société, leur inspirer l'amour des vertus, les éloigner du vice, etc.; ouvrage dans lequel on a extrait des morceaux de Plutarque, Cicéron, Pline, Quintilien, Montesquieu, *Montaigne*, Fénélon, Buffon, Raynal, etc. *Paris, Deterville* (no date), 2 vols. 12, fig. (by Retz, but published anonymously.) This work is the same that appeared in 1790, under the title *Guide des Jeunes Gens de l'un et de l'autre sexe, à leur entrêe dans le monde;* the titles only are changed.

13. Le Portrait du Sage, extrait de Confucius, Platon, Zénon, Cicéron, Sénèque, Epictète, Marc Aurèle, Plutarque, *Montaigne*, Bacon, Charron, Fénélon, La Bruyère, Sterne, J.-J. Rousseau, Weiss, etc.; editeur, Gabriel Peignot, *Paris*, 1809, 12mo. 48 pages, "grand papier velin fort, tiré à 75 exemplaires tous numérotés, et deux sur papier rose."

14. *L'Esprit de Montaigne*, avec une préface et des notes, par M. Laurentie, *Paris, Mequignon-Havart et Bricon*, 1829, 18mo., 1 vol. Part of the Bibliothèque choisie, published under the direction of M. Laurentie.

This volume is extracted not from the Essays, but from the work of Pesselier, which the present editor has, however abridged: "Nous avons gardé," says he, "dans ce recueil ce qui a dû être inspiré seulement par le christianisme; le grec du portique a disparu. Ce livre contient, non pas Montaigne échappé des écoles d'Athénes, mais Montaigne française et chrétien."

APPENDIX TO THE ESSAYS.

PART II.

PORTRAITS OF MONTAIGNE.

There are several PORTRAITS, reputed ORIGINALS, of Montaigne.

1. Fiquet has left us one, after a very remarkable portrait, painted in 1578, by Dumoustier.

2. The Montaigne engraved by Chéreau, in 1725, is after a portrait which at that time belonged to M. Berroyer, Counsellor to the Parliament.

3. That published by Delpech is copied from a portrait which was for a long time in the Depôt des Archives, and has only been recently removed thence.

1. The most ancient of the ENGRAVED PORTRAITS that I am acquainted with is that which appeared in the editions of 1611 and 1617, signed *Thomas de Leu:* it has some resemblance to that of Dumoustier.

2. Father Lelong (in the *Bibliothèque Historique*) mentions, about this epoch, a portrait of Montaigne by Jaspard Isaac.

3. *The same*, by Desrochers. 4to.

4. The edition of 1635 has a portrait, with no signature, which also appeared in the editions of 1652 and 1657. The armorial bearings by which it is accompanied are incorrect. In some copies the arms are omitted.

5. The edition of 1640 has a portrait, but without any signature.

6. There is a portrait, signed *N. de Larmessin*, in the edition of Paris, 1659.

7. *The same*, also in the edition of Holland, 1659, with the signature *P. Clouwet.*

8. Also in the edition of Paris, 1669, with the signature *Matheus.*

9. There is a portrait of Montaigne, in the small size, in the work by Freher, published in 1688.

10, 11, 12. In the edition of the Essays, 1641, in that of "L'Esprit de Montaigne," 1677, and in the "Pensées," 1701, there is

respectively a portrait of very small size. That of 1641 is signed *F. Honeruogt.*

12. *The same*, designed by *Genest*, engraved by *Chéreau*, 4to. 1723 (after that of 1635), in the edition of London, 1724. The arms here also are incorrect.

14. *The same*, engraved by *Chéreau*, 4to. 1725 (after the portrait announced as original, communicated by M. Berroyer). The arms are correct. In the edition of Paris, 1725.

15, 16, 17. There are three reductions of this portrait; one in 8vo., in the edition of Amsterdam, 1781; another, in 12mo., in the edition of London, 1771; the third, in 18mo., in the edition of the "Pensées," London, 1783.

18. *The same*, designed by *Jorat*, and engraved by *François*, in the manner of red chalk, in 4to., in the work of *Saverien*. (See the list of authors.)

19. *The same*, *J. Blanchon*, inv. sculps. A reduction, in 8vo., of the preceding; black, with the initials of *François*.

20. *The same*, in the line manner, in the work of Lavater, vol. 3, La Haye, 1796, folio.

21. *The same*, engraved by *Fiquet*, in 8vo., after a portrait by *Dumoustier*, in 1578. This portrait is one of the finest of all that have been published.

22. *The same*, after the same; no signature. In the edition of 1796.

23. *The same*, engraved by *A. de Saint-Aubin*, and finished by *Romanet*, 4to. A fine engraving, in the edition in 4to. of the Journey.

24. *The same*, engraved by *Voyer*, jun., 4to. (after the preceding.)

25. *The same*, signed *F. N. et Martinet*, 8vo. (after the preceding.)

26. *The same*, designed and engraved by *Noel Primeau* (after the preceding), 8vo., in the editions published by Bastien.

27. *The same*, engraved by *Lebeau*, 4to. (Esnauts et Rapilly.)

28. *The same*, *Marillier* del., *Ponce* sculp. In the work entitled *Illustres Français*.

29. *The same*, designed and engraved by *F. Bonneville*, 8vo. (after that by Saint-Aubin.)

30. *The same*, engraved by *P. M. Alix*, after *Dumoustier*, and coloured by *Bechet*, folio, oval form, published by Drouhin.

31. *The same*, designed by *Cocaskis*, engraved by *Alex. Tardieu*, 8vo., in the edition by Lefevre, 1818.

32. *The same*, engraved by *Leroux*, after *Dumoustier*, 8vo., in the edition by Desoer.

33. *The same*, engraved by *P. Audoin*, 8vo., in the edition by Chasseriau.

34. *The same*, in the line manner, by *Meysens* (Landon dir.), 8vo. (Biogr. Univ. et galerie hist. de Landon.)

35. *The same*, designed and engraved by *Dupont*, in an edition by Lefevre, 8vo.

36. *The same*, exactly resembling the preceding as to the portrait, engraved by *Pollet*, in another edition of Lefevre, 8vo.

37. *The same*, designed by *Deveria*, engraved by *Fauchery*, 8vo.

38. *The same*, engraved on steel by *Lefevre*, 4to., published by Blaisot.

39. *The same*, *Aug. Saint-Aubin*, a profile in medallion, 8vo., in the edition by Naigeon.

40. *The same*, *C. Hulot*, a profile in medallion, in the edition in 18mo., by Lefevre.

41. *The same*, at the head of a *Notice sur Montaigne*, in the "Iconographie instructive."

42. *The same*, engraved by *Read*, from the original picture in the Depot des Archives du Royaume, at Paris, published by Templeman.

There are several other portraits, in different sizes, without signatures.

The full-length portraits of Montaigne are:

43. In the engraving by *M. Forster*, from the picture by *Gros*, representing Charles the Fifth visiting the tomb of St. Denis, folio.

44. In the engraving by *Baquoy*, after *Ducis*, of Montaigne visiting Tasso, folio.

45. *The same*, *Leroux* sculp., *Devéria* del., 8vo. 1822.

46. *The same*, engraved by *Leroy*, after *Dupont*, large 8vo., 1835, in the *Plutarque Français*.

47. A lithographed portrait, *Bouillon* del., after the bust in the *Musée des Monumens français*, 4to., in the *Galerie Française*.

48. *The same*, 4to., *Gautheret et Weber*.

49. *The same*, folio, *P. Indré*.

50. *The same*, folio, *Maurin* (after that of the *Musée des Monumens Français*), published by Delpech.

51. *The same*, reduced from the preceding.

52. Published copy (Paris) of the original painting on wood, in the possession of Dr. Payen.

53. *The same*, in Mr. Bayle St. John's Biography of Montaigne.

54. *The same*, in the edition of Montaigne's Works, published by Hurd and Houghton.

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